

## MASTER OF ARTS BY RESEARCH

### A comparative and analytical study of news reportage of the Holocaust in The Times of London and the New York Times during the Second World War

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# **A Comparative and Analytical Study of News Reportage of the Holocaust in *The Times of London* and *The New York Times* during the Second World War**

**Melissa Janda**

**Masters by Research**

**September 2013**



# **A Comparative and Analytical Study of News Reportage of the Holocaust in *The Times of London* and *The New York Times* during the Second World War**

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**September 2013**

***A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of Coventry University's  
requirements for the Degree of Master of Research, International  
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**Supervisory Team: Dr. Frank Magee and Professor Neil Forbes,  
Coventry University.**

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## Contents

Introduction	6
Chapter One: <i>The Times</i> ’ Presentation of Atrocity News Stories	15
Chapter Two: <i>The New York Times</i> ’ Presentation of Atrocity News Stories	29
Chapter Three: Factors Influencing <i>The Times</i> ’ Placement of Holocaust- Related News	40
Chapter Four: Factors Influencing <i>The New York Times</i> ’ Placement of Holocaust- Related News	52
Chapter Five: Comparing the Reportage of Holocaust-Related News	65
Conclusion	75
Bibliography	79

## **Abstract**

This thesis compares and analyses how news of the events now cumulatively known as the Holocaust were communicated to wartime readers of *The Times* (London) and *The New York Times*. The concept is original given the existence of secondary literature dealing with either British or American newspaper coverage, but with no comparative work examining both. For example, Laurel Leff's 2005 publication '*Buried By The Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper*' and Andrew Sharf's 1964 book '*The British Press and Jews Under Nazi Rule*' provide individual accounts of press coverage of the Holocaust.

Fundamentally, this thesis considers how news was presented through examining page placement in either newspaper, and questioning whether this was indicative of how significant Holocaust-related news was deemed to be by editors given the context of the Second World War. A number of other influential factors are also dealt with, for example the experience of atrocity stories in the First World War and the sheer incomprehensibility of a continent-wide, racial, exterminatory programme. Some journalistic notions, such as 'above-the-fold' and the use of 'jump' stories are also considered. Conclusions are drawn on the similarities and differences that existed between reportage of the Holocaust in the two newspapers, as well as how this reportage changed during the years 1939-1945.

This research shows that news of Hitler's 'Final Solution' was communicated to newspaper audiences, but that these stories were not always afforded much column space and prominence because of a focus on war news. It is proven that Holocaust-related news did appear towards the front of both newspapers in some instances- occasionally in lengthy articles- refuting Leff's claims that this news was 'buried' in *The New York Times*. It introduces possible further research into comparative studies of how news of the Holocaust was communicated to the Allied public via a variety of channels.

## **Glossary**

***Above the fold***-The top half of a newspaper page; above where the fold normally appears. This tends to be where the most important stories and images are placed as this area catches the reader's eye first and readers tend to read from top to bottom.

***Below the fold***- The bottom half of a newspaper page (see 'Above the fold').

***Broadsheet***- A standard-sized newspaper; normally 13 inches by 2.5 inches. Sometimes viewed as more intellectual than tabloid newspapers which focus more on celebrity news. Recently, some traditional broadsheet newspapers have offered a compact version with the same news as the standard-sized edition.

***Heavy news day***- A day on which there are many stories and news events to report.

***Jump story***- A story which begins on page one, for instance, and continues inside the newspaper. It is generally thought that readers do not often follow these stories but they are important in allowing newspapers to place various stories on a front page without giving the in-depth coverage an inside story could claim.

***Sub-heading***- A heading which appears under the main story headline. This may be smaller in size and appear later into the article to break up the story.

***Well-ad layout***- A style of advertising placement in which adverts appear on either side of a page to create a 'well' or 'U'-shape for news stories.

## Introduction

The Holocaust remains a singular event in modern Twentieth Century history. This genocidal conflict occurred on an unprecedented scale and led to an estimated death toll of six million Jews. As well as pursuing the mass extermination of European Jewry, the Nazi government also committed horrific atrocities against the civilian populations of occupied lands such as Poland, France, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union. The systematic nature of the genocide is evident through the majority of Nazi victims perishing in specially-designed camps and ghettos across Europe. Additionally, the uniqueness of the Holocaust is mirrored through the unique coverage it received in the press (Kalb in: Shapiro, 2003: 10)

In the 1930s and 1940s, local and national newspapers brought the latest information from around the world to their readers, acting as a connection between the Home Front and troops (Buljung, 2011: 44). How much could have been known about these atrocities through newspaper coverage has attracted some scholarly attention. Laurel Leff, author of '*Buried by The Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper*' (2005), and Deborah Lipstadt, author of '*Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust 1933-1945*' (1986) are two key authors on this topic. Andrew Sharf, in his work '*The British Press and Jews Under Nazi Rule* (1964)', provided an early British perspective on the issue. However, there is a gap of literature comparing Holocaust news reportage in these two Allied countries.

The aim of this project is to provide an alternative and original perspective on the topic through comparing how news of the Holocaust was presented in *The Times of London* (hereafter referred to as '*The Times*') and *The New York Times* during the Second World War. Stories which appeared in *The Sunday Times* are not included. In addition to examining how often stories on the treatment of Jews and other minorities under Nazi control appeared in *The Times* and *The New York Times*, this research will examine where those stories appeared within the newspaper, for example the page number and positioning. This technique is adopted from Leff's research but with an original contribution through a comparison of two newspapers. The project will draw conclusions on how and why editors gave prominence to certain stories, examine what differences or similarities existed in the news reportage of the treatment of Jews and other minorities, and finally offer some explanations for this. Chapter



Five will examine whether reportage of Holocaust-related news changed during the course of the war.

Whilst some authors such as Leff and Hollander assert that Holocaust-related news was purposely hidden in the wartime press, this research questions that accusation. It is shown that Holocaust-related news was occasionally given prominent placement in both *The Times* and *The New York Times*. The belief that Holocaust-related news was hidden can be countered with the argument that for many people across Britain and America, a swift end to the war was a more pressing concern than the rescue of persecuted civilians in Occupied Europe.

Despite their regional titles, both *The Times* and *The New York Times* were, and still are, considered to be major national and trustworthy broadsheet newspapers. *The Times*' circulation in 1939 stood at 204,000 (Jeffrey & McClelland, 1987: 29), whilst *The New York Times* boasted the reputation of being America's 'national newspaper' because of its readership of 780,000 by the late 1920s (Prieto, 2007:1), up to half of whom lived outside of New York (Leff, 2005:10). It was also the only American newspaper delivered to homes at this time ('Reporting on The Times', 2013) and set the standard for other U.S. newspapers (Leff, 2000: 57). Interestingly, *The New York Times* also had a high proportion of readers who were first or second-generation European Jews (Leff, 2000: 57), meaning they may have had family members still living in Europe during the Holocaust. According to Lookstein, it is likely that a majority of Jews living in New York during the Second World War relied on *The New York Times* for their Jewish news, and they respected the accuracy of its reports (Lookstein, 1985: 25). What was included in the newspaper therefore indicates what could have been known by American Jews about the fate of their European brethren. Both newspapers were, and still are, read daily by national policy-makers such as Members of Parliament and Congressmen. Pierre Salinger, President Kennedy's Press Secretary, once said "No top policy-maker in Washington starts his day without reading the New York Times" (Walker, 1982: 2). A recent example is a statement that President Obama 'only' reads *The New York Times* (Shapiro, 2013, n.p). How these newspapers reported news of German atrocities therefore provides some indication of governmental awareness of these killings. Being based in two Allied major cities meant that news was communicated efficiently. London and New York sent wireless messages to one another which communicated the news published in each newspaper. This means that readers of either newspaper were likely to share a similar knowledge to their counterparts across the Atlantic.

However, *The New York Times* did not face the same paper restrictions as *The Times*, which allowed it to publish more stories in greater detail; suggesting the newspaper's readers may have known 'more' than their counterparts in London. As mentioned in Chapter Three, *The Times* was restricted to an average of between eight and ten pages during the throes of war, whereas *The New York Times*, at times, boasted upwards of forty pages. Arthur Hays Sulzberger (the newspaper's publisher) managed this partially through sacrificing revenue generated from advertising; preferring instead to print more news stories.

This topic is encompassed by the larger Holocaust historiography theme. It especially questions the actions, or lack of action, by Allied governments to halt the killings once they became aware of the reality of the situation. Much literature has been written debating whether the governments of Britain and the United States could have intervened to bomb the railway lines leading to Auschwitz Concentration Camp and other killing sites. Whilst this project will not deal with this issue, the findings of it will contribute to knowledge on Allied awareness of the persecutions in occupied areas and therefore question the belief they did not act because they were unaware of the persecutions. How much Allied governments knew can be gleaned from analysis of wartime national newspapers, particularly as the two newspapers under analysis here were especially read by policy-makers and high-ranking politicians. They likewise would have reported governmental attitudes by interacting with Members of Parliament or Congress. Being based in London and New York also meant that editors of these two newspapers were placed amidst the forefront of governmental wartime actions, and so, in theory, could have reported the news before more regional newspapers. Katznelson suggests that although the Allies were well aware of the unfolding mass murder of the Jews, they treated it as a "sideshow" partly because there was not much they could hope to accomplish (2003: 32). This thesis supports Katznelson's claim to the extent that the Holocaust was treated as a "sideshow" only because of the distraction of the Second World War. As shown in Chapters Three and Four, newspaper readers were understandably more concerned about the fate of their loved ones serving in the armed forces than the fate of persecuted minorities. This meant that war news was often prioritised in placement over news of Nazi atrocities.

The current literature dealing with newspaper coverage of the Holocaust does not dispute that Holocaust news stories appeared in the press. It does though suggest that these stories were 'hidden' because of their placement within the newspapers, and the lack of space dedicated to them. Wyman states that newspapers did not print the full extent of their knowledge, and that

when they did, it was often buried in the inside pages (Wyman, 1998: 28). He is supported by Laurel Leff who states in *'Buried by The Times...'* that of 1,186 stories about what was happening to the Jews of Europe during the Second World War, only on twenty-six occasions did these stories make the front page (Leff, 2005: 2). Moreover, Leff states that in six years of "highlights of the year in review", the deaths of millions of Jews were mentioned once: in 1942 as part of the Allied governments' confirmation of the extermination of the Jews. Even this was considered less important than the U.S. military's plans to use universities as training grounds and the resignation of a price administrator (Leff, 2000: 69). Deborah Lipstadt's work *'Beyond Belief...'* also provides extensive coverage of American newspaper coverage of Nazi atrocities. Lipstadt explicitly states in her introduction there was practically no aspect of the Nazi horrors which was not publicly known before the camps were liberated in 1945 (Lipstadt, 1986: 2). However, Lipstadt raises the question of whether press treatment, for example placement, of these atrocity stories raised doubt in the minds of ordinary readers about their believability (1986: 3). As a result, readers did not truly believe the stories until they were shown photographic evidence by their compatriots following the liberation of extermination camp sites in 1945.

Linked to this is a consensus that news editors were sceptical about publishing atrocity stories due to a lack of belief in their reliability; a suggestion which this thesis supports. Many editors, and readers, believed that the stories were false rumours which were being used as propaganda to incite hatred against the Axis enemies; as had been the case during the First World War. In 1915, The Committee on Alleged German Outrages, also known as the Bryce Committee after its chairman Lord Bryce, reported German forces in Belgium to be guilty of widespread atrocities (Wilson, 1979: 369). In the aftermath of the war, these allegations were proven to be largely false. As a result, editors and readers were conscious of this during the Second World War and were careful not to be deceived for a second time (Hollander, 2003: 44). Moreover, officials of both the US Office of War Information and the British Ministry of Information ultimately concluded that though the facts of the Holocaust appeared to be confirmed, they were likely to be thought to be exaggerated, meaning that agencies would lose credibility by disseminating them (Novick, 2001: 23). Lacquer suggests this is why when stories appeared in 1941 and 1942 about mass murder, the use of poison gas, and the manufacture of soap from corpses, the general inclination was to avoid it with reference to the 'lessons' of World War One (Lacquer, 1982: 9). This point is analysed in greater detail in

Chapters Three and Four as one possible reason why newspaper editors were cautious about constantly and prominently reporting Holocaust news reports.

This cautiousness is also shown through the World Jewish Congress' (WJC) treatment of Gerhart Riegner's famous telegram in 1942. The WJC was aware that some editors may interpret the telegram as 'Jewish propaganda' and so clear facts needed to be established prior to its distribution (Leff, 2005: 151). A greater sense of unreliability is evident through Lacquer's emphasis on the psychological difference between available information and the belief in it. He writes that whilst the press published considerable information on Nazi atrocities and the government had access to much more information than published, many people could not "know" something which tested the limits of their comprehension. For this reason, many people believe they did not really "know" of the atrocities until the end of the war when newsreels and newspapers displayed horrific images of camp sites (Breitman, 1999: 8). This is supported by Robert Abzug, who says that the emergence of graphic images in movie theatres across the United States in the spring of 1945 marked "a turning point in Western consciousness" (Shandler, 2000: 26), implying that the American public were not fully aware of Nazi atrocities until the war's end. Similarly, Yehuda Bauer explains two obstacles to belief: routine doubts (whether the information is correct) and existential doubts (doubts about the meaning of the information). Both came into play concerning news of the Holocaust as many American readers may have either doubted the accuracy of the news, or accepted the news as accurate but could not comprehend such a catastrophe. An example of this is an encounter between U.S. Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter and Jan Karski, a Polish courier who had been imprisoned in both the Warsaw Ghetto and Belzec in October 1942. Karski met with Frankfurter and other American dignitaries in August 1943. After Karski finished telling Frankfurter of all he had witnessed, Frankfurter replied that he did not believe him. When Karski objected, Frankfurter added that he did not mean Karski was lying, but that what he had said was too horrible to believe (Leff, 2003: 53). Similarly, Hamerow suggests that some of those who did not believe the Holocaust did not want to believe in it subconsciously, or consciously. Believing that millions of Jews were being murdered in Europe would have intensified pressure on the Allied governments to act, leading them into a crusade to save persecuted civilians rather than to conquer Hitler's aggression and invasion (Hamerow, 2008: 396-397)- which had been the root cause of the war.

Editorial policy also influenced reportage of the atrocities being committed in Europe, particularly those stories focusing on Jewish persecution. As will be examined in greater

detail in Chapter Four, Sulzberger was determined to avoid *The New York Times* from being viewed as a 'Jewish newspaper' as a result of constantly reporting 'Jewish issues'. Some historians such as Tifft & Jones believe this is why Jews were not singled out for special mention on the pages of *The New York Times* during the Holocaust (1999: 215). Editorial policy at *The Times* differed in that there was no complex about the newspaper being stereotypically labelled. Instead, Geoffrey Dawson and his successor, Robert Barrington-Ward, were understandably most concerned about British military strength and the war effort, meaning this news was prioritised for coverage in the newspaper. This is further examined in Chapter Three.

In his work dealing with wartime propaganda, Balfour accuses *The Times* of propagandising during the Second World War, even if unintentionally, through deliberately giving prominence to certain facts, emphasising the importance of others by writing commentaries about them, and handling others only marginally or not at all. According to Balfour, in doing so, *The Times* observed the basic principle of propaganda in that it did not reproduce facts objectively but coloured subjectively through selection and the method of presentation (Balfour, 1979: 431). This concept will be examined through analysis of *The Times*' placement of stories in Chapter One, and *The New York Times*' placement of news in Chapter Two. This is very different to the notion of "black" propaganda which is generally all lies. It aims to undermine morale and sow doubt into the minds of the enemy through exploiting his beliefs and feelings. "Black" propaganda was in fact used during the Second World War through the "secret" radio transmitter, actually in England, but purporting to come from dissatisfied members of the Wehrmacht in Germany (Rhodes, 1976: 112).

Much of the existing literature asserts that the names of concentration and extermination camp sites did appear in wartime newspapers, and so readers were informed of these. According to Hollander, for the last three years of the war, when 3.5 million Jews were killed, the American newspaper reading public knew in detail of the Holocaust. It was also clear that this persecution was not merely a continuation of the anti-Jewish measures of the 1930s (2000: 2-3). However, Leff disputes that stories about camps were highlighted. She states that "Although anti-Semitic legislation and Hitler's anti-Semitic rants were well publicised, details of concentration camps and other abuses were not" (Leff, 2005: 59) because of their placement within the newspaper. Accounts of the camps did appear relatively early into the Holocaust, depending on which date one believes the 'war against the Jews' to have commenced. This also impacts on the notion of how late into the Holocaust Allied

governments knew of the crimes. Sharf states that one of the earliest accounts of Buchenwald appeared on August 20<sup>th</sup> 1938, although this was in ‘*Time and Tide*’. *The Times* first mentioned ‘Oswiecim’ (more commonly known as Auschwitz) on May 20<sup>th</sup> 1941 as part of a page four story headlined “GERMAN ATROCITIES IN POLAND”. The first reference to Oswiecim in *The New York Times* appeared as early as March 30<sup>th</sup> 1941 on page nine. By November 25<sup>th</sup> 1942 the paper reported that Jews were being gassed there, and on June 25<sup>th</sup> 1944, the gruesome details of the camp were revealed (Leff, 2003: 66); seven months before the camp was liberated by the Red Army. Such news was likely to have been wired to newspapers by the Polish Government-in-Exile based in London. However, this is challenged by Emanuel Ringelbaum’s accusations that “the Polish government (in London)...did not pass (the news) on the slaughter of Polish Jews” onto the world. According to Ringelbaum, the Polish government “concealed” the Jewish tragedy so that it did not eclipse their own (Stola, 1997: 16). If this was truly the case, *The Times* was denied a close and reliable source of atrocity news. Leff’s assertions that news of concentration camps was hidden in *The New York Times* will be examined in Chapter Two. Lipstadt states that in 1942 the Polish government informed the press that the Nazis had ordered the extermination of half the Jews in Poland by the end of the year, and that Jews were being massacred by an SS ‘Special Battalion’ or transported to “special camps at Treblinka, Belzec and Sobibor” where they were mass murdered (Lipstadt, 1986: 181). Much detail may not have been reported at this stage simply because it was yet unknown to news editors, as opposed to editors choosing to hide such news (Leff, 2005: 136).

This project supports a thesis that news about the persecution of Jews and minorities in Occupied Europe did appear in both *The Times* and *The New York Times*. This was to the extent that ordinary readers of either newspaper could have known of the existence of numerous concentration and extermination camp sites, and the fate of those who were transported there. In particular, readers could have been reliably informed of the use of gas chambers for mass murder. According to Laqueur, the first reports about the ‘Final Solution’ appeared in the British press through a *Times* report on April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1942 about Dutch Jews being gassed at Mauthausen. The first American reports appeared in *The New York Times* on June 30<sup>th</sup> and July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1942 (Laqueur, 1979: 26-27). The detail of treatment of prisoners at such camps understandably increased towards the latter war years, once the camps had been in operation for over a year and once a lucky few had managed to escape or to relay their stories to neutral or Allied zones. Where editors chose to place these stories differed between

the two newspapers. This is explainable through *The Times*' set structure on Mondays to Saturdays whereby the first four pages were as follows: the front page was used for classified news and notices; page two was dedicated to Home News; page three was headed 'Imperial and Foreign'; and page four was a continuation of war-related news. Page eight featured some stories on the fate of minorities as this was the 'Parliament' page. *The New York Times* differed greatly as news was assigned to a page according to perceived importance. For example, news deemed especially important would appear towards the front of the newspaper, whereas 'lesser' stories appeared towards the back. This is considered by journalists to be a traditional method of newspaper structure. Those stories chosen for the front page therefore indicate what news was deemed most 'newsworthy' by *New York Times* editors as these were selected to be the first stories the reader should know. The fact that the two newspapers did not share the same structure means that where stories were placed cannot be completely equally compared. In the case of *The Times*, where the stories were placed on the page itself will be deemed more indicative of how highly regarded a story was. The notions of 'above the fold' and 'below the fold' are particularly significant in *The Times*' case but will also be considered for *The New York Times* in addition to the page number for Holocaust-related news.

The methodology for this project fundamentally lies in analysis of original newspaper copies of *The Times* and *The New York Times* during the years 1939-1945. Approximately 540 stories were researched and analysed from *The Times*, and 530 from *The New York Times*. This does not indicate that more Holocaust news appeared in *The Times* than *The New York Times*, as this initial data collection was guided by loose terms such as 'refugees' which did not refer only to Jews. For the same reason, this does not likewise suggest that *The Times* published 540 stories explicitly reporting Holocaust events. Instead, approximately 187 *Times* and 339 *New York Times* stories used for this study were considered significant.

Prior to beginning primary research, *The Times*' index for the years 1939-1945 was consulted to collate a list of dates on which relevant stories may have appeared in the newspaper. This was achieved through searching for terms such as 'Jews', 'atrocities', 'extermination' and the various concentration camp site names, such as 'Oswiecim'. The process was replicated for *The New York Times*. Given that both indexes were written by newspaper companies, they were considered to be highly reliable sources. However, *The New York Times*' index was found to suggest that fewer stories appeared than in *The Times* as there were fewer references to the terms being searched for. This is surprising given the fact that more explicitly

Holocaust-related news appeared in this newspaper (see Conclusion). A distinct '*Index to The New York Times Articles on the Holocaust, 1933-1948*', written by Potanski, was also accessed at The Weiner Library, London. The existence of such an index contradicts the lack of references to Holocaust-related terms in *The New York Times*' general index, and suggests that a great deal of stories did appear in the newspaper. This index greatly benefitted the research as it meant any terms that the researcher may not have initially searched for were included; thus increasing the amount of potential Holocaust-related stories used for the study.

The dates of stories referred to in existing secondary literature, such as Leff and Lipstadt's work, were also noted as important to research and to check as accurate. Once a list had been compiled, copies of the newspapers were accessed at Coventry University's Lanchester Library and the British Library's Newspaper Archives at Colindale, London. This qualitative method of data collection and analysis was deemed most appropriate because of the lack of a need for excessive statistics, and the inability to conduct questionnaires or personal interviews with key individuals because of the time period this historical study considers. Moreover, the qualitative aspect of the research provided scope for the necessary amount of analysis of the news stories used.

Structurally, Chapter One provides detail and analysis on how *The Times* presented its atrocity stories, whilst Chapter Two offers the same for *The New York Times*. Chapters Three and Four provide some common reasons why editors of both newspapers may have hidden and prominently displayed such news. Chapter Five considers how reportage of the Holocaust changed during the war, before raising some points of contrast and comparison. Any newspaper headlines featured are quoted directly from the original newspaper copies. Therefore, the reader may find that some stories are capitalised whereas others are not. This is not intended to provide any special emphasis, but to replicate the way in which these stories were originally presented.



## **Chapter One: *The Times*' Presentation of Atrocity News Stories**

Some of the ways in which *The Times* presented its news reports on the atrocities being committed in Nazi-occupied zones- such as the confinement and starvation of Jews in ghettos- did not highlight the significance of this news. This included placing stories on a second page of war news, 'below the fold', and a lack of 'special articles' on the topic appearing on the fifth page. No Holocaust-related news appeared on the front page of *The Times* during the war as this was reserved for classified news and personal advertisements. In fact, it was not until May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1966 that *The Times* broke with tradition by placing news on its front page (Howard, 1985: 122).

As previously mentioned, *The Times* had a set structure. Throughout the war, page three was dedicated to "Imperial and Foreign" news, meaning that it was on this page that most war-related news appeared. Any war-related news which did not appear on page three was placed on page four. However, as this was the second page of war news, it was more likely to be ignored or discarded by readers who may have interpreted it as less important as it was not worthy of space on the main war-news page (see Chapter Three for analysis of issues most important to *Times* readers). A count indicates that forty-eight of all of *The Times*' stories analysed for this project appeared on this second page of war news.

One story to have appeared on page four of *The Times* was "A VICTIM OF THE GESTAPO" on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1940. This short story was not only placed on page four, but also 'below the fold' and directly above the latest military appointments. Therefore, unless a reader had a special interest in these appointments, it is likely that this story would have been glanced over or avoided completely. Had this story been read, the reader would have discovered that M. Maciej Rataj, a former speaker of the Polish Parliament, was murdered by the Gestapo. *The Times* states the German 'official' verdict of a heart attack, whilst reporting that the truth was that he was tortured to death. Where this took place, for example at a concentration camp, is not clear. Regardless, the story is a prime example of how the Gestapo were mistreating prominent individuals in occupied areas. Yet, *The Times* apparently believed the story to be no more important than the latest military appointments, placing these stories together. The story comes 'from a Polish correspondent' and so is most likely to be written by someone who had witnessed first-hand the horrors being carried out by Nazi occupiers. On the other hand, if this correspondent was a Polish national, the story may not

have been believed by readers or editors who possibly thought that the author was keen to exaggerate the situation to encourage the Allies to further attack Germany.

“GERMAN ‘REPRISALS’ IN OCCUPIED LANDS”, which appeared on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1941 as part of a larger story on “FREE FRANCE” further indicates how some news of Nazi atrocities was less prominently placed on page four. The story provided short, factual reportage on a few occupied regions, including France, Belgium, and Croatia. Interestingly, the story explicitly referred to Jews through reporting that fifty Jews and Communists had been condemned to death by court martial and shot for their connection to a bomb explosion at a post office in Croatia. However, it did not separate the two groups and so there was no indication from this that the Nazis were pursuing a campaign against European Jewry. Instead, there is a suggestion that they were being, perhaps rightfully, punished for criminal activity. The reality was that this may have been exaggerated or even falsehood, and used as a cover to justify Nazi actions against civilians of occupied territories. This example is also the only time that Jews are referred to in the story: in the other cases all victims are labelled simply as ‘Communists’. Such a label supported the Nazi stereotype of Jewish Communism- in particular ‘Jewish Bolshevism’- which the Nazi government proclaimed an enemy of the regime. This derogatory label therefore not only failed to single out Jews as chief Nazi victims, but may have also stirred up a degree of apathy for Jews who were portrayed as criminals and political extremists.

A final example of a page four story is that of January 14<sup>th</sup> 1942 when “PUNISHMENT FOR WAR CRIMINALS” appeared in the bottom half of the far-right side of the page. Ironically, given its reference to death, it appeared just above the obituaries. The story reported that nine Allied governments reinforced at the Inter-Allied Conference at St. James’ Palace their intention to bring to justice Nazis or their collaborators who had committed crimes against civilians. What these crimes constituted is not mentioned in the story, although in a rare example for *The Times*, readers are directed to page eight for a full report of the conference. As readers are to be directed to page eight, the question arises of why this story was placed on page four as opposed to page three given the fact that it refers to nine Allied governments and space cannot be an issue as it was used as a ‘jump’ story. Should readers have turned to page eight, they would have been faced with a three-column story under a headline “NAZI CRIMES TO BE AVENGED: ALLIED COUNTRIES’ DETERMINATION”. This article quoted the declaration at length before turning to some detail on the situation in occupied regions. It reported that in Greece, 1,000 Cretans had been executed and many villages

burned to the ground. Missing from the story was a reference to death camps, possibly either because the existence of these was not yet known by editors as the existence of concentration camps was, or because there was an assumption that readers were aware of the types of ‘atrocities’ being committed through reading other news stories on the issue.

As *The Times* had a set page structure, this study has assumed that the stories placed ‘below the fold’ were regarded as less important in the same way that stories towards the back of *The New York Times* were regarded this way (see Chapter Two). Of all of the stories used for this project, *The Times* placed seventy-three stories below the fold. As a result, these stories may have been ignored by readers who read the newspaper from top to bottom but regarded those towards the bottom of the page as less important. This would especially be the case for *Times* stories placed below the fold on page four (as discussed above).

Had *Times* readers dismissed the stories placed below the fold, they would have missed some crucial news relating to German atrocities. For example the March 6<sup>th</sup> 1942 story headlined “GERMAN BARBARITIES IN RUSSIA”, which told of an eight-hundred page report (mentioned previously in *The Times*) which had now been made into a twenty-page pamphlet and was available for purchase. This report was the Polish Government-in-Exile’s ‘The Black Book of Poland’, although the story did not state its title. The story also failed to detail the atrocities reported in this pamphlet, although this may be because the January 15<sup>th</sup> 1942 story- when the report was initially mentioned- did provide more detail on what the atrocities entailed. Regardless, readers may not have remembered the details given the time that had elapsed, and so *The Times* could have reinforced this knowledge by reminding readers of the extent of the horrors and dedicating more attention to the issue. Failure to do so is disappointing given the book’s extensive detail on the Warsaw Ghetto and feature of an explicit statement by the Polish Minister for Home Affairs that the systematic extermination of the Jews of Warsaw was an objective of Nazi policy (Groth, 2011: 138). Moreover, given that the original report numbered eight-hundred pages, *The Times* could not have been short of detail, which may be a reason why some other Holocaust-related news was not reported at length.

Another key story placed ‘below the fold’ was the page-four story of September 16<sup>th</sup> 1942 headed “VICHY ON DEPORTATION OF JEWS”. This story explicitly mentioned that several thousand Jews were being sent back to their ‘country of origin’ by the Vichy

government and that Cordell Hull (U.S. Secretary of State) had denounced this. This report was highly accurate, with the first arrests and deportations of Jews in Vichy France by the Gestapo beginning between August and September 1942 (Kedward, 1985: 16). Around 15,000 Jews were deported in this way during these two months, including many Jews who would have considered themselves to be French having lived there for up to thirteen years prior to the outbreak of war (Kedward, 1985: 62). The story was placed at the bottom of its column, with the same space dedicated in the next column to an obituary section for Dame Margaret Greville (a philanthropist) and Professor H.D. Wright (Professor of Bacteriology at the University of Liverpool), showing it was deemed no more important than news of these deaths. This is ironic given the almost certain death facing those deported from France in 1942.

In a similar vein to newspaper editorials, *The Times* frequently published ‘Special Articles’. These most commonly appeared on page five in the far-right hand column, but in some cases appeared as late as page ten. Only eight such articles appeared during the Second World War on the topics of Nazi atrocities or Jews, suggesting this was not an issue prioritised by the newspaper’s editorial board. The earliest such story used in this study was “LUBLIN FOR THE JEWS... A STONY ROAD TO EXTERMINATION”, which appeared over pages nine and ten on December 16<sup>th</sup> 1939. This shocking story dismissed the German claim that Jewish deportation was part of its ‘Lebensraum’ (‘living space’) programme, and instead reported a plan for the gradual extermination of all Jews under German control. Whether this was actually a concrete extermination plan at this early stage of the war or simply a threat to encourage Allied nations to accept Jewish immigrants would be debated by the Functionalist and Intentionalist schools of thought. The fact that the story was spread over two pages is a unique instance for *Times* stories used in this study. The newspaper can thus be credited here for opting to spread the story over two pages as opposed to cut details short and place it on one page alone. Similar topics chosen for ‘Special Articles’ on the same day included “Hearing Music at Home” and “Golf: A Story from Musselburgh”. These two seemingly trivial headlines suggest that ‘Special Articles’ were not always of a serious and meaningful nature. They also indicate the predominantly professional or middle-class readership of the newspaper as these topics would appeal to that demographic. Nonetheless, the very headline of this ‘Special Article’ reveals the murderous intentions of the Nazi occupiers and had readers continued with the story, they would have learnt that Nazi plans were instead to

exterminate all Jews under German control. Shockingly, given that it appeared in the early stages of the war and extermination campaign, the article details an eyewitness account from a man involved in a transport from Teschen. The account reports that all men aged fourteen to sixty were to go to the local railway station, where ninety to one hundred men were then bundled into each railway carriage bound for Ulanov. After a few days, those deemed too weak to work were “marched off”- presumably to be shot in a nearby forest or mass grave. Moreover, the story reported that a Nazi chief in Vienna had told Jews that the area was to be ‘Judenrein’ (‘Jew free’) by February. They will emigrate, be sent to Lublin (which we know meant eventual extermination), or be “combed out in different ways”. What these ways entailed was not detailed, but with hindsight it is fair to assume they also meant extermination. Poignantly, the final sentence of the whole article (referring to these Viennese Jews) was “But where are they to go?”, firstly highlighting the plight of these Jews and secondly playing on the guilt of readers or MPs who did not urge action to save them through relaxing immigration quotas to provide refuge in Britain or Palestine.

Another particularly revealing ‘Special Article’ appeared on *The Times*’ page five on November 19<sup>th</sup> 1941 and was headlined “HITLER’S WAY TO THE ‘NEW ORDER’: A RECORD OF SYSTEMATIC TERRORISM”. This featured a table headed “NUMBER OF CIVILIANS EXECUTED IN ENSLAVED COUNTRIES”, adding that these were not soldiers being killed in combat, but defenceless citizens. Unsurprisingly, Poland had the highest number of civilians shot or hanged (at least 82,000) and taken to Germany (1,200,000). It is fair to assume from the story that those being sent to Germany were being taken to concentration camps, as the story mentioned that 1,000 Frenchmen had disappeared and may have been taken to “German concentration camps”. If *The Times* had faith in the statistics produced in this table, it is questionable why it did not appear as part of a story on the Imperial and Foreign page where it more likely would have caught the attention of readers as soon as they opened their newspapers. On the other hand, editors may have been keen to single out the information for a lengthier article in the form of a ‘Special Article’, justifying its placement on page five. This may have been because the detail featured in the table warranted more prominent placement.

A final significant ‘Special Article’ appeared on September 1<sup>st</sup> 1943; the anniversary of the German invasion of Poland. The article was aptly headed “POLAND’S MARTYRDOM: FOUR YEARS OF NAZI OCCUPATION AND TERROR: A POLICY OF EXTERMINATION”. The article provided a brief chronology of the Nazi actions in Poland

since occupation, but the real significance of the story lay with its mention of Oswiecim, where six-thousand were reported to have died in gas chambers to the date. This was by no means *The Times*' first reference to Auschwitz, or Oswiecim, but is significant because it recognises the role of the camp in the Nazis' extermination campaign. It is furthermore an instance of newspaper acknowledgement of the use of gas chambers for extermination purposes, indicating a degree of knowledge that many claimed not to possess until camp liberation in 1945. Importantly, it proves that Nazi actions at Auschwitz could have been known of by ordinary British newspaper readers, let alone high-ranking parliamentarians, and thus again raises accusations of inaction by Allied leaders.

Evidently, few 'Special Articles' featured in *The Times* during the course of the war, yet those which did appear contained some crucial and ground-breaking information about what is now known as the 'Final Solution'. The use of gas chambers at concentration camps is one particularly important example of how 'Special Articles' were used to report atrocity news. It would thus be unfair to claim that wartime *Times* editors failed to communicate such news to their readers.

At times, the set structure of *The Times* highlighted Holocaust news stories in way that a lack of structure may not have. The primary example of this is the dedicated war news page, page three. In contrast to stories hidden 'below the fold', some Holocaust-related news did appear in the top half, which will be analysed here. Reader letters are also indicative of news of atrocities being understood by *Times* readers, as they began to question Allied inaction and encourage solutions in contrast to Hitler's 'Final Solution'.

Throughout the war period, page three became a dedicated 'Imperial & Foreign' page used for war-related news. This in itself shows the priority of *Times* editors, as page three is accepted by most journalists to act as a hypothetical second front page (Finberg & Itule, 1990: 80). It is the first page that a reader's eyes are directed to once they open their newspaper. The stories that appeared on page three were therefore likely to be deemed most newsworthy by editors, and it is telling that one hundred and seventy-eight, the vast majority, of *Times* stories used in this study appeared on this page. Placing most stories on a 'second front page' suggests that *Times* editors could not have wanted to hide Holocaust news, but given that this was a dedicated page for such news, where these stories physically appeared on the page and their length assumes more importance as an indication of editors' attitudes.

A prominent example of an important page three story was that of September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1940, which was headed “GOEBBELS ON LYING”. Although the story was very short and appeared ‘below the fold’, it reported that Joseph Goebbels had accused Britain of propagandising against Germany. Goebbels was quoted as saying “Everywhere in the world the clearness, reserve, and veracity of German news reports, in contrast with British lying reports, have achieved their objective”. This hints at a Nazi recognition of Allied newspaper reports on Axis atrocities and seems like a desperate attempt to reassure Germans that these reports were lies in contrast to ‘trustworthy’ German reports. It is questionable how *Times* readers who were sceptical of the reports emerging from Occupied Europe would have responded to this. On one hand they may have believed Goebbels and sought proof through the placement of this short story near the bottom of the page as evidence that Britain was again creating false stories about the wartime enemy. Yet they may also have interpreted Goebbels’ statement correctly as an attempt to trick people into believing that the reports were false, when they were true, and hence be more inclined to believe what was being printed by their countrymen.

Another important page three story appeared on October 25<sup>th</sup> 1940. This significant story, headed “GHETTO FOR WARSAW: JEWS GIVEN A WEEK TO MOVE”, reported that all Warsaw Jews had been given one week to move freely into the Warsaw Ghetto or else be forced there. The official reason given was that Jewish homes were known to be breeding places of infectious diseases, and so the measure was necessary to protect Germans against infection. Ironically, confinement in these ghettos spread infection more easily and so the statement is completely ridiculous. The fact that *The Times* placed this story on page three implies that the newspaper could not have been attempting to hide atrocity stories, yet the shortness of it and its placement around the mid-page point is significant as it was clearly not deemed worthy of more prominent placement at the top of a column.

An especially lengthy page three story appeared on November 20<sup>th</sup> 1941 over the first two columns on the Imperial and Foreign page. The story, headlined “HOSTAGES OF HITLER: NAZI BRUTALITY”, reported on an Inter-Allied Information Committee statement acknowledging that although many thousands had been arrested by the Nazis and sent to concentration camps, no murders had been reported. Should the Committee be referring to reports from the Germans themselves, this would surely be more questionable than if the Germans were concealing the murders. Following the aforementioned November 19<sup>th</sup> 1941 story, this story reported that at least 82,000 Poles had been executed since German occupation began and that 30,000 of these had died in concentration camps. This figure

seems realistic with hindsight but may have been too large for wartime readers to grasp, leading to lack of believability. Perhaps *Times* editors felt that featuring such similar stories over two consecutive days would act to suppress this attitude. This story also provided an indication of the fate of those sent to concentration camps, which readers may not have been fully aware of because of their difference to British concentration camps in the Boer War. Whilst the conditions at these original concentration camps were harsh, the methods of mass murder and torture were very different. For example, there was no use of gas chambers and the numbers of deaths did not reach the levels of Nazi extermination.

*The Times* also chose to place a majority of its Holocaust news stories in the top half of all of its pages. One hundred and thirty stories appeared ‘above the fold’ in contrast to seventy-three below the fold. This could be used as an indication of which stories *The Times* deemed most important, through their placement, as is usually the case with ‘above the fold’ stories.

One such example is an April 11<sup>th</sup> 1942 Imperial and Foreign page story which was headed “NEW TERROR IN POLAND: HIMMLER’S ORDER”. This appeared as the first story not only in its column, but also on the page. Theoretically, it should therefore have been the first story to be read because of its prominent position. The story reported on a recent visit by Himmler to Hans Frank in Cracow, stating that Frank was given orders to launch a new terror offensive against Poles. The article is quoted as reporting: “Every day death sentences are passed on Poles, as well as numerous terms of penal servitude in prisons and camps” yet it failed to detail the treatment or fate of Poles who were sent to concentration camps. Interestingly, the correspondent separated victims of death sentences for crimes from victims of camp deportation, yet all camp inmates were in effect serving a death sentence.

Another story prominently placed as the first story to appear on the Imperial and Foreign page was “TENSE WEEK AT VICHY” (July 29<sup>th</sup> 1942). This story spanned the whole of the first column along with three-quarters of the next, and detailed the increasing strain on Franco-German relations. The brutal treatment of French Jews was explicitly cited as one reason for this. Under a sub-heading “BRUTALITY TO JEWS”, it reported that the Gestapo and German soldiers had rounded up around 20,000 Jews over the past week, and that they had been “herded into camps”. Whether these were concentration or extermination camps is not reported, but it would be fair to assume that these Jews were sent to either type of these camps where their brutal treatment would continue. The accuracy of this is supported by



Kedward, who states that an initial mass round up of Jews in France occurred in July 1942, and that 9,000 French police and administrators assisted German occupied forces with the round up (1985: 63). The significance of this story lies in its reportage of German treatment of French Jews as a source of tension, as it thus recognises and implies that Vichy officials were powerless against preventing deportations. This may have been because the remaining French officials in Vichy were anxious to avoid German forces turning against French-nationality Jews. Moreover, the great detail of the story highlights how *The Times* was perhaps more willing to publish atrocity stories occurring geographically close to the United Kingdom, which readers may have been more susceptible to believe, as opposed to atrocity stories from Eastern Europe which could more easily be dismissed. This geographical factor may partly explain why World War One atrocity stories from Belgium were widely believed to be true at the time.

Two more important Holocaust-related stories to have appeared ‘above the fold’ were “NAZI WAR ON JEWS: DELIBERATE PLAN FOR EXTERMINATION” (December 4<sup>th</sup> 1942) and “PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS... NAZI ‘MASS SLAUGHTER’” (December 11<sup>th</sup> 1942). These two lengthy stories appeared on the Imperial and Foreign page just one week apart. Both were the first stories on the page. Their placement alone is symbolic of Allied awareness and recognition of the extent of Nazi horrors towards the end of 1942, which culminated in the Allied Declaration of December 17<sup>th</sup> 1942. With this awareness arguably came more willingness from newspaper editors to place Holocaust news stories in more prominent positions, as demonstrated by these two stories. The first story (December 4<sup>th</sup>) reported that Polish Jews were being condemned to conditions which would undoubtedly lead to their extermination, and that the General-Government had been intended to be ‘Jew-free’ by December 1<sup>st</sup>. Any Jews remaining outside of the Warsaw Ghetto were to be liquidated through transportation eastwards to an unknown destination or be killed where they stood. The December 11<sup>th</sup> story likewise reported on the Nazis’ extermination campaign through reference to extermination camps intended for Polish Jews and others deported there. Horrifically, the story also estimated that of a pre-war Polish Jewish population of 3,130,000, over one-third had already perished, thereby recognising the death toll as reaching millions. This was likely to be accurate given the fact that by January 1942 approximately one million Jews had already been murdered (Bialystok, 2000: 24), and during 1942 (after the Wannsee Conference) the Final Solution was accelerated through the transportation of Nazi victims to concentration and extermination camps. The fact that both of these stories were first to appear

in their columns, and were spread over two columns, highlights that *The Times* did give prominence to some Holocaust-related news when details were known. The dates are revealing as they appeared in the fortnight before the United Nations' official statement acknowledging the atrocities being committed against civilians in Occupied Europe. The general public could therefore have felt there was a degree of reliability to these reports and an increasing public perception that they were true.

All of these stories appeared in 1942, suggesting that it was around this stage of the war that newspapers became more inclined to believe the emerging reports on the treatment of civilians in Occupied Europe. As mentioned above, this is likely to be because it was in December 1942 that nine Allied governments openly admitted awareness of Nazi persecutions and began to vow action against the perpetrators. As a result, the reportage of such news began to alter, with atrocity stories attracting more attention from editors; hence more prominent reportage (see Chapter Five).

Another indication of Allied awareness of Nazi atrocities is *The Times*' highlighting of this news on its 'Parliament' page. Albeit, regretfully, the issue only appeared on *The Times*' 'Parliament' page (page eight) six times during the war. This was mostly in the form of reportage of House of Commons debates.

One such example of a Parliament page story is the article headed "PRIVILEGES OF THE COMMONS: M.P.s AND SECRET SESSION", which appeared on June 19<sup>th</sup> 1942. Under a sub-heading "RETRIBUTION FOR NAZI MURDERS", Sir T. Moore was quoted as asking Prime Minister Winston Churchill whether he was aware that innocent people were being murdered by Nazi occupiers, and that thousands more were threatened with the same fate. Moore appealed to the Prime Minister to follow the Old Testament proverb an eye for an eye. Attlee (Deputy Prime Minister) responded through asserting that the Royal Air Force (RAF) would be used effectively to bomb German villages in retribution for the murders, to which news the House cheered. Evidently, the issue of Nazi atrocities was being raised in Parliament long before the Allied declaration in December 1942, but the best way to respond to this knowledge was still debated.

As would be expected in the aftermath of the Allied declaration, the Parliament page of December 18<sup>th</sup> 1942 featured a lengthy article on Nazi crimes against the Jews. The issue

dominated the first three columns on the page under a sub-heading “PERSECUTION OF JEWS” despite the main heading being “FUTURE OF CIVIL AVIATION”. The article reported MPs’ demands for retribution, with Anthony Eden suggesting that both those who ordered the murders and those who carried them out shared the responsibility. Interestingly, action was also urged by the Archbishop of Canterbury who expressed his hope that the British government would offer free asylum for those able to escape occupied zones. The sad state of affairs was that, by this stage of the war, the Nazi government had forbidden Jewish emigration out of occupied areas and so this was an unworkable solution. This article nonetheless reinforces that Parliament was openly aware of Nazi atrocities by late 1942. Eleanor Rathbone MP in particular campaigned on behalf of persecuted Jewry. In a House of Commons debate on March 10<sup>th</sup> 1943, Rathbone asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to meet with the U.S. Secretary of State at Ottawa for a discussion on the ways in which Nazi victims could be saved from persecution. Eden reinforced his commitment to do so (HC Deb. (1942-1943) 387 cc638-40 638). Any doubt that emerging reports from Occupied Europe were propaganda would have surely been suppressed given the raising of the issue in Parliament and the vast support from MPs for a solution.

Another instance of news of Nazi persecutions featuring in Parliament appeared on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1944. A sub-heading “PLIGHT OF POLISH JEWS” appeared under a mass headline of “AID FOR REFUGEES”. This section reported that a Jewish National Committee operating in Poland had estimated that although 250-300,000 Jews remained in Poland in January, within weeks no more than 50,000 would remain. Shockingly, the report explicitly stated that last November 25,000 Jews were “annihilated” in the two largest Polish concentration camps and that 10,000 more were machine-gunned to death. The names of the two camps were not mentioned, which may have been for a number of reasons. Firstly, because the Jewish National Committee did not name them in its report; secondly their names were unknown; or thirdly because it was assumed that MPs were aware which camps these were likely to be. Despite the heading referring to Polish Jews, Sir Walter Smiles MP raised the case of other nationalities suffering at the hands of Nazi occupiers- such as Greeks and Belgians. This suggests that *Times* readers would have been informed of the extent of the atrocities and the various groups being persecuted, which included, but was not limited to, Jews.

Whether reporting atrocity stories on the Parliament page was a method to highlight or hide news is debatable. On one hand, *The Times* was clearly showing that news of persecutions was being debated in the House of Commons, and so this news must have been genuinely

believed by MPs to be true. However, it is worth considering who read this page, and who read it in detail. The most likely readers would have been those who were already active in politics, such as MPs, civil servants and local politicians who wanted to keep abreast of political developments which may affect their professional life. These high-standing individuals would, as a result of their status, already possess some knowledge on the actions of Nazi occupying forces as they may have dealt with reports emerging from front-line Allied forces or individuals attempting to contact the British government. Placing the news on the Parliament page is therefore not likely to have affected their knowledge, as they would have already been informed of the situation to some degree. Instead, ordinary readers of *The Times* who were not involved in politics were probably more likely to gain new information from this Parliament page if they chose to read it in detail. Yet, this is likely to have been a small percentage of readers, as typical newspaper placement would have led them to believe that simply reading the first few pages, especially the Home News and Imperial and Foreign pages in *The Times*' case, would have provided them with a fix of the most newsworthy stories or events likely to affect their everyday lives. Any newspaper readers are, after all, most interested in news which is relevant to them. In wartime, this most commonly included news which may relate to loved ones serving in the armed forces (see Chapter Three).

As mentioned above, the appearance of reader letters raising the issue of Nazi atrocities serves to indicate that news of Nazi actions in Occupied Europe was permeating *Times* readers' consciousness. Whilst ten such letters appeared during the war, it cannot be known how many more readers felt compelled to write into the newspaper but did not succeed in having their letters published.

Two letters championing the case for a Jewish Army appeared around autumn 1942. Both shared the headline "A JEWISH ARMY", and appeared on August 2<sup>nd</sup> and September 11<sup>th</sup>. The earlier letter, which was marginalised through its placement at the very bottom of the final column on the page, came from J. Linton, the Secretary of The Jewish Agency for Palestine. Linton made clear the Jewish Agency's support for mobilisation of Jewish manpower for both a Jewish combat force and Home Guard duties in Palestine. The second letter was written by Jack White, a British-born Jew who served in the First World War and was awarded a Victoria Cross for his services. White expressed clear support for a Jewish Army, which he felt would provide his Jewish brethren with an opportunity to fight in

defence of helpless refugees who are being humiliated by the enemy because of their Jewish origin. This story was similarly hidden at the bottom of the column but was surprisingly longer than that from the Jewish Agency. Nonetheless, both letters are indicative of a proposed solution to rescue Jews from persecution where possible, in this instance through increasing the fighting force against the Nazi enemy and symbolically providing Jews in free zones with an opportunity to fight back against the perpetrators of their fellow Jews' suffering.

A particularly interesting letter appeared in *The Times* on December 5th 1942. Under a headline "NAZI WAR ON JEWS: THE NEW BARBARISM: RESPONSE OF CIVILISED WORLD" appeared a letter from William Temple, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Through this, the Archbishop expressed his "burning indignation" at "Hitler's project for the extermination of the Jews" before suggesting that the United Kingdom should accept any Jews who are able to escape and pleading that those responsible face punishment post-war. In contrast to the Jewish army letters, this story was prominently placed in the top quarter of the fifth column on page five with three capitalised headlines to attract the reader's attention. It would be fair to assume that this was because of the reputation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose letter warranted more prominence as readers were more likely to trust what was written than if it had come from an ordinary member of the public.

Many letters appearing in *The Times* referred to persecuted Jews as 'refugees'. Letters appeared on almost three consecutive days in April 1943 (7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup>) on this topic, the latter two under a headline "MEN WITHOUT A COUNTRY". This therefore appears to have been a topical issue at this stage of the war in anticipation of the Bermuda Conference. The general consensus of these three letters was that there was no single European country which could be deemed a safe haven for Jews because of their long history of persecution and an expected reluctance amongst Jews to return to Germany at the war's end. A.W.H. James, of the House of Commons, in his April 10<sup>th</sup> letter offered the suggestions of an extension of the Palestinian quota once conditions permitted this, or the creation of a Jewish state in South-Eastern Europe as this was where most Jews had historically been concentrated. All three letters acknowledged that there could not be one accepted solution to the question of Jewish persecution but did provide some suggestions which remained ignored by the Allied governments. This is not indicative of the issue being ignored by the Allied governments, as shown by discussion of the issue in the House of Commons in May 1943. In a May 5<sup>th</sup> debate, three different MPs questioned the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the

decisions or recommendations made at the Bermuda Conference. Eden replied that some conclusions had been reached, but that these recommendations primarily involved the military and therefore had to remain confidential (HC Deb. 1942-1943, 389 cc148-50 148).

In the same vein as the Parliament page, it is worth considering who read the Reader Letters. Most likely, those who read the page were likely to have a special interest in a certain topic, and would have simply read the letters with headlines which struck them as particularly interesting or relevant. Since any reader would have been free to write to *The Times*, some fellow readers may have sided with caution when choosing whether to believe what they read. In the case of the Archbishop of Canterbury's letter, readers were more likely to believe the content. Moreover, if only readers with a special interest read letters concerning Nazi atrocities, they were likely to already possess some knowledge on the issue as they may have already read many of the stories printed in *The Times*.

As demonstrated above, there are some instances of important news not being presented in *The Times* in ways which match this significance, such as "GERMAN BARBARITIES IN RUSSIA" which was placed 'below the fold'. On the other hand, some news was prominently presented on the Imperial and Foreign page, such as "GHETTO FOR WARSAW: JEWS GIVEN A WEEK TO MOVE". Given the significance of the Warsaw Ghetto in the Holocaust- its use for the concentration of Jews and later the symbolic uprising there- *Times* editors can be credited for presenting news of the ghetto's initiation in ways which readers would find hard to miss. How their New York counterparts presented similar news is the subject of the next chapter.

## **Chapter Two: *The New York Times*' Presentation of Atrocity News Stories**

*The New York Times*' lack of a set structure meant that it placed stories within the newspaper according to perceived importance. Placement of atrocity stories towards the middle or back of the newspaper is therefore indicative of how important the newspaper's editors viewed them in the context of a world war. Similar to *The Times*, *The New York Times* also displayed some news stories in ways which downplayed their importance, for example 'below the fold' and amidst large advertisements.

Whereas *Times* editors decided specifically where on a page to place the most important news, *New York Times* editors were faced with the task of deciding which stories to prominently display through their page number. The page numbers on which Holocaust and other atrocity stories appeared therefore indicates the priorities and concerns of the newspaper's wartime editors, as well as their perceptions of which stories they felt their readers would be most interested in (see Chapter Four).

The most common page number for *New York Times* stories used in this study is calculated to be page five, yet a Holocaust-related story appeared as far back as page forty-seven on January 7<sup>th</sup> 1940. This story was headlined "PALESTINE CALLED POLISH JEWS HOPE...MESSAGE TO UNITED PALESTINE MEETING CITIES HAVEN OFFERED TO VICTIMS OF PERSECUTION" and reported that 70,000 Jews had settled in Palestine since 1933. The very fact that Jews were mentioned in the headline and were labelled as "victims of persecution" was revealing, as some historians such as Leff accuse *The New York Times* of concealing that Jews were Hitler's primary victims. Whilst Jews of all nations were targeted by the Nazis, the death toll of approximately twenty million Soviet citizens (Gilbert, 2000:746) highlights the extent to which other racial and national groups were likewise targeted. Nonetheless, the placement of this near the end of the day's issue perhaps led editors to feel more inclined to single out Jews as victims, as the story may have been missed by some readers, and therefore the paper would have avoided the feared backlash of focusing on 'Jewish' issues (see Chapter Four).

"PRESIDENT RENEWS PLEDGES TO JEWS...2,000,000 REPORTED DEAD" appeared closer to the front of the newspaper (page twenty) on December 9<sup>th</sup> 1942. This story was

prominently placed across the top half of the first five columns of the page. Interestingly, the story reported that President Roosevelt had pledged to take any steps which “will end these serious crimes against the Jews and against all other civilian populations of the Hitler-ruled countries and to save those who may yet be saved”, yet we know Allied inaction left many millions of Jews victim to Nazi atrocities in the final two years of the war. The article also reported a memorandum to the President from a Jewish delegation which outlined that already 2,000,000 Jews had been done to death and that 5,000,000 more lived under a similar doom. Shockingly, the story even reported that “extermination centers (sic)” had been established in Eastern Europe and that Jews there were being asphyxiated through the exhaust pipes of trucks. This may have been a reference to Chelmno where Jews were gassed in precisely this way beginning in December 1941. Whilst this extremely detailed story appeared towards the middle of the newspaper, the main story on the front page on the same day was “ALLIES DRIVE BACK FOE NEAR TEBOURBA; AIR STRUGGLE CRUCIAL, ARNOLD ASSERTS; 15 WARSHIPS STILL AFLOAT AT TOULON”. The fact that this story was clearly war-related is an example of how *New York Times* editors prioritised news which may have affected their readers, especially those who were friends or family of U.S troops.

In some cases, and in contrast to *The Times* which reserved the front page for classified news, *The New York Times* did place some news of the atrocities in Occupied Europe on its front page. This is examined in greater detail below, but one example is that of January 29<sup>th</sup> 1940, when “MASS SHOOTINGS IN POLAND LAID TO NAZIS BY CARDINAL” appeared in the sixth column of page one but continued on page five. From reading the front page alone, *New York Times* readers would have gleaned that the Pope had received an 11,000 word document consisting of seven reports about the conditions in Poland up until December 30<sup>th</sup> 1939. Amongst other examples, the document reported that older Jews were being herded into railway carts and dumped after several days in the General Government. Should readers have continued to read on page five, they would have learned of the existence of concentration camps, specifically one in the Glowa suburbs near Poznan, the location of which they could trace through the adjacent map of Poland.

Evidently, *The New York Times* waived in its consideration of where was best to place Holocaust-related reports. Some especially important stories, such as one reporting Roosevelt’s pledge to save persecuted Jews, were still placed further back in the newspaper than the average for such news (page five). This may have been dependent on other news at



the specific stage of the war, and whether it was a 'heavy' news day on which editors deemed it more important to give prominence to the stories most likely to affect their ordinary American reader.

Another way in which news of Nazi atrocities was sometimes concealed in *The New York Times* was through the presentation of these stories across more than one column, with only a few sentences in each column. The newspaper may have chosen to present stories in this way to accommodate as many stories as possible on one page, which may have been restricted if following the standard vertical layout of news stories. However, if the stories were placed over numerous columns, it is questionable how many readers would have followed the story as they may have appeared longer than they actually were. Therefore, unless readers had a special interest in the headline, they may not have proceeded to read the entire story. Fairly, readers can be forgiven for not reading the entire story if it continued in many other columns because of the standard newspaper rule to 'cut from the bottom'. This is where lesser information and detail is placed towards the end of a news story so that in the instance of a shortage of space, editors can cut lines from the bottom of the story without losing any vital information and without wasting time reading over the story.

This was certainly the case for the November 27<sup>th</sup> 1939 story headed "RESPITE GRANTED TO TESCHEN JEWS- Reich Allows Two Weeks More Before Mass Transport of Thousand to Poland" which appeared on page seven. This story was oddly structured, starting at the top of the first column, continuing just above the middle of the next, and concluding at the top of the third column. This structure was likely to cause some confusion amongst readers who may have lost track of its continuation by the end of the second column and thus missed the news in the final column. The story was shockingly detailed, reporting in just the second paragraph that every man, woman and child of the Jewish community of Teschen was to be 'transported' to Poland in the following fortnight. Importantly, these deportations were recognised as part of a grand plan involving the deportation of Jews from the Protectorate, Western Russia, and the Old Reich. What would happen once these Jews had been deported to Poland was not reported, perhaps because the 'Final Solution' was not yet concretely decided on. Finally, the report concluded that it was unknown how plans to create a Jewish ghetto in Poland would affect Jewish emigration. Readers of this story would therefore have knowledge not only of mass deportations to Poland- which could be gathered from the first

section of the story alone- but also of plans to create a Jewish ghetto, the purpose of which was not adhered to here. Given the reference to deportations to Poland, readers may have deduced that such ghettos were to be used as a preliminary step to this.

Another example of a story spanning columns is “PRAGUE REPORTING INCREASED UNREST” which appeared on March 7<sup>th</sup> 1940. This story ran over columns two, three and four, with adverts dominating most of the right side of the page. Should readers have followed the story across the three columns they would have learned of the existence of Buchenwald Concentration Camp, where it was reported that many inmates were dying of hunger and disease. This news may have been missed because unless they had a real interest in the situation in Prague, readers may not have followed the story across columns because it appeared fairly long. This is supported by McKane, who asserts that many news stories are not read to the end and that readers move on after the first few paragraphs when the main points are covered (2006: 48). Moreover, they may have been attracted to the seven different advertisements which appeared to dominate the page, or the picture of members of the expedition of the Natural History Museum in Vienna arriving in New York.

A final example of news being spread across columns is that of the September 4<sup>th</sup> 1944 story headed “PARIS JEWS AWAKE FROM NIGHTMARE”. This news story featured across columns five, six, seven and eight, using approximately one-third of column five and decreasing in space as it progressed to leave only one full paragraph in column eight. The fact that it was unequally spread over four columns meant that readers were likely to have a special interest in the story for it to keep their attention. Alternatively, readers may have read the first column, which they could fairly assume contained the crux of the story, and ignored the other columns. The story itself reported that 90,000 of 100,000 pre-occupation Parisian Jews were deported. The remaining Jews had now been freed by American troops in Paris. The correspondent also detailed some eye-witness reports of the conditions under Nazi occupation, such as the Jewish curfew and restrictions on shopping.

A common feature in *The New York Times* was the use of ‘jump’ stories (see Glossary). These often began on the front page, but in some instances began inside the newspaper and continued even further into the issue. They can be interpreted as a way to diminish the importance of Holocaust-related news, as ‘jump’ stories on any topic are not generally followed by readers unless they are especially interested in reading the remainder of the

story. The average American reader may therefore not have followed the stories, and as a result, missed significant news of Nazi atrocities in contrast to if editors placed the story on one single page. They may even have been used tactically by *New York Times* editors who wanted to avoid a 'Jewish newspaper' label by constantly reporting on Jewish issues (see Chapter Four) yet also wanted to avoid criticism from Jewish readers or organisations for not reporting on Nazi persecution of European Jewry.

An example of a 'jump' story appeared on May 11<sup>th</sup> 1941 under a headline "Nazis Held Ready to Crush Serb Guerrillas and Jews". This story began in the bottom half of columns six and seven on the front page, but continued as far into the newspaper as page twenty-nine where it used three columns. The most striking aspects of the story featured on page one where the first paragraph alone reported a German plan to "exterminate Serbian guerrillas, seek out and destroy or imprison their families, eliminate the few remaining Serbian political leaders and unleash a ruthless anti-Jewish pogrom throughout Serbia, Bosnia and Macedonia". Furthermore, the story reported that Jews were being openly segregated through having to wear yellow armbands and being prohibited from shopping at public markets prior to 10:30am. Readers of this story were therefore informed not only of a grander plan for extermination, but also of the more everyday aspects of Jewish persecution.

Another 'jump' story example is that of June 14<sup>th</sup> 1942, when "258 Jews Reported Slain in Berlin For Bomb Plot at Anti-Red Exhibit" also began on the front page but continued inside on page nine. The story was already marginalised through its placement in the bottom half of columns five and six on page one, meaning it could have been discarded by readers even before they followed it inside the newspaper. The story reported that two hundred and fifty-eight Jews had been put to death by the S.S in reprisal for an alleged Jewish plot to blow up an anti-Bolshevist exhibition in Berlin, despite the fact that Jews- identifiable by wearing the Star of David- were ruled off the streets of Central Berlin. The continuation of the story within the newspaper reported that the Lawerowstrasse Synagogue in the East End of Berlin was being used as a concentration depot for Jews awaiting deportation. Where these Jews were being deported to was not reported, but it would be fair to assume that the destination for some would have been Auschwitz, which was fully operational by this time. The front page on which this story appeared was also another example of how *New York Times* editors presented news according to perceived importance to their readers. This is highlighted through the main headline on the front page being "U.S. BOMBERS STRIKE IN BLACK SEA REGION, REPORTED ATTACKING RUMANIAN OIL WELLS; NEW YORK

CHEERS PARADE OF WAR MIGHT” which appeared near a large picture of U.S. troops outside New York’s Public Library. The very fact that the headline mentioned U.S. bombers implies that readers would naturally be drawn to this story as it dealt with conditions which immediately affected them, whereas the story on Berlin Jews would not affect their ordinary lives. Trivially, even the sports results were more prominently displayed than this story, appearing at the top of the second column on the front page.

There is just one instance of a ‘jump’ story relevant to this study beginning and continuing within the same issue of *The New York Times Magazine*. This appeared on January 9<sup>th</sup> 1944 under a headline “The Nightmare That Is a Reality” (analysed in detail below). The story began on page five but continued on page thirty. The story may have been formatted this way to accommodate other magazine features, but as with stories within the newspaper, how many readers followed the story is questionable.

Holocaust-related news was not the only news to have been reported through the use of ‘jump’ stories. *The New York Times* also reported General de Gaulle’s arrival in the United States for discussions with General Eisenhower through a ‘jump’ story on July 6<sup>th</sup> 1944, as well as a story encouraging trade and imports on November 29<sup>th</sup> 1944. Whilst the story on De Gaulle’s arrival in the United States may have been deemed important to American readers given its appearance one month after the Allied landings at Normandy, the second example illustrates that ‘jump’ stories may have been used by *The New York Times* to report news which was not immediately concerning to its readers. At such a late stage of the war, the story on imports suggests that thoughts had turned to rebuilding the post-war American economy. Whilst this would have been particularly important for American businessmen, most Americans were likely to have been keener to see an Allied victory declared, and so any news directly relating to this should have been prioritised in placement. Had a ‘jump’ story reporting solely on American war progress appeared, this would indicate that such stories were not believed to diminish the importance of the events they reported.

Readers may have been distracted from following stories because of *The New York Times*’ placement of its atrocity news stories amongst large advertisements. This is interesting given Arthur Sulzberger’s decision to reject every advert offered to his newspaper in order to accommodate more news (see Chapter Four). At times, these adverts dominated the page and were up to four times larger than the stories themselves. This meant that readers may have glanced over the page or been more attracted to the advertisements than the stories

themselves. As a result, significant news was ‘buried’ and likely to be ignored. This may have been the price to pay given the financial return of agreeing to place such large advertisements within the newspaper.

One example of a story being inhibited by advertisements is that of “MORE NAZI CRIMES LISTED BY SOVIET...Attacks on Women and Girls Said to Be Part of Program- Mass Murders Described”, which appeared on page seven on January 8<sup>th</sup> 1942. The story reported that Russia had charged Germany with crimes ranging from rape to mass murder, and that German occupiers had also robbed Russians of their homes and crops. Furthermore, it outlined that 52,000 had been murdered in Kiev, 6,000 in Lwow and more than 8,000 in Odessa. However, the page on which this appeared was heavily dominated by adverts for B. Altman & Co, Franklin Simon, and Penn Fifth Avenue (all clothing stores); all of which were placed towards the right-hand side of the page where reader’s eyes would naturally be drawn. This story, beginning in the first column but continuing in the bottom half of column two, was secluded in comparison.

One distinct example of stories being placed amongst large adverts is page eight of *The New York Times* on May 8<sup>th</sup> 1944. This page was set out in the style of a ‘well ad layout’ (see Glossary), with adverts forming a bold ‘U’ shape across the page. However, the top of all four columns used for news reporting was used for stories relating to Nazi atrocities. Two stories featured in these columns: “SOVIET SAYS NAZIS MURDERED 102,000” and “Hungarian Notables Reported Slain by Nazis to Hide Secret of Horthy Role in Occupation”. The first story reported that 102,000 civilians and POWs were murdered in Rovno in Poland and that many of the victims were made to dig their own graves. Shockingly, it even reported that mass murders took place in gas vans in 1943, but where this occurred was not clear. The second story specifically focused on the murder of thirty Hungarian army officials in the cellar of the National Bank. The placement of these stories is contrastable to other examples where adverts dominated the page and disguised news stories. These stories were clearly placed in a prominent position on the page, which may have been enhanced by the well-ad layout as opposed to adverts appearing on one side of the page only. Even if readers did discard the page because of the dominance of adverts, simply reading the headlines of these two stories would have indicated the situation for civilians in occupied zones, and so this news was reported clearly.

A final example of domineering advertisements is page seven on November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1944. Over three-quarters of the page were dominated by an advert for Saks Fifth Avenue. The only news to appear was confined to the top far-left corner of the page. Here appeared a story “Haidari Prison Outside Athens Ranks High Among Nazi Horrors: Inmates Had to Run, Never Walk, Were Beaten With or Without Cause, Taken Away in Truckloads for Secret Mass Murder”. Fundamentally, the story reported the existence of a prison camp outside Athens which held up to 6,000 “criminals” at a time. The brutality of the camp was described, although there was no mention of mass murder through gassing, and those who were murdered were taken to Goudi as opposed to ‘an unknown destination’ in Poland. Only two other stories appeared on the page- one reporting Roosevelt’s praise for the youth of the United Nations and one reporting a new Jamaican constitution- both of which were shorter than this story. In fact, the three stories combined would have equalled just under one whole column, indicating that this news was deemed unimportant by editors and marginalised through placement next to huge adverts which were likely to distract readers.

On the other hand, there are instances of *The New York Times* prominently displaying Holocaust-related news stories. Primarily, this was through the occasional appearance of such news on the front page; something which did not happen in *The Times* because of its set daily structure. Furthermore, *The New York Times* gave whole pages of advertising space to the Bergson Committee to champion their work.

According to Laurel Leff, the Holocaust made the front page of *The New York Times* just twenty-six times during the whole Second World War period, and when such news did appear, Jews were rarely singled out as the main victims (2005: 3). Leff is supported by “NAZI MASS KILLING LAID BARE IN CAMP: Victims Put at 1,500,000 in Huge Death Factory of Gas Chambers and Crematories”, which appeared on the front page on August 30<sup>th</sup> 1944. This was a ‘jump’ story placed above the fold and which continued on page nine. The first reference to Jews as victims was in the second column of the story on page nine, and even then they were named alongside other groups such as Poles and Russians as opposed to being singled out as primary victims. Editors of *The New York Times* may have been cautious about singling out Jews as primary victims in the headline or earlier in the story because of a determination to avoid the newspaper being labelled as ‘Jewish’ (see Chapter Four). On the other hand, Jews were not the only victims of Nazi atrocities, and so it is possible that the newspaper felt coverage of these atrocities should not be focused on Jews alone. Therefore,

when Jews were not the only victims, as they were not at Maidanek, the newspaper was sure to state this.

However, there are many examples disproving Leff. For example, “NAZI PUNISHMENT SEEN BY ROOSEVELT: Says Hitler Will Be Held to ‘Strict Accountability’ - Churchill Greets Rally” (July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1942), which reported on the previous evening’s mass meeting at Madison Square Garden. Whilst Wyman also criticises *The New York Times* for its failure to emphasise that hundreds of thousands of Jews were being murdered, and mentioning this is why the rally was being held (1998: 26), in just the second paragraph, the names of three Jewish organisations (the first organisations reported as being present) were named as participants in the “mass demonstration against Hitler atrocities”. Further down the column, it was reported that Prime Minister Churchill had praised the contribution of world Jewish communities to the UN’s cause; reinforcing an implication that Jews were victims of Nazi oppression. Acting as a ‘jump’ story, the article continued on page four where it used three quarters of four columns. Here, it was reported that hundreds of thousands of defenceless Jewish men, women and children were being murdered as part of a Nazi intention to “destroy the Jews throughout Europe”. The reference on the front page to three important Jewish organisations- the American Jewish Congress, the B’nai B’rith and the Jewish Labor Committee- highlights the singular role of Jews in the Holocaust as no other national or racial group is mentioned as having representatives at the Madison Square Garden meeting. There could therefore be no doubt that Jews were primary victims of Nazi atrocities.

Another mass meeting- the ‘Stop Hitler Now’ rally- at Madison Square Garden was reported on the front page on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1943 under a headline “SAVE DOOMED JEWS, HUGE RALLY PLEADS: United Nations Must Halt Nazi Murders Now; Leaders Tell 21,000 at the Garden”. The story appeared in the middle of column seven on page one before continuing across four columns on page four. Apart from the striking headline, Jews were immediately singled out as main Nazi victims in the first sentence, which reported that immediate action was required from the UN to save up to five million Jews who were threatened with extermination. On page four, the story not only again reported the role of significant Jewish groups in the organisation of the rally, but also quoted Chief Rabbi Hertz who accused the proponents of the Four Freedoms of doing little to save Jewish victims. Once again, it was clear for readers to see that Jews were the predominant persecuted group in Occupied Europe.

An interesting way in which the Holocaust was presented in *The New York Times* was through the appearance of adverts by the Committee for a Jewish Army of Stateless and Palestinian Jews (the Bergson Committee). The Bergson Committee was led by Hillel Kook (later known as Peter Bergson)- the nephew of the Chief Rabbi of Palestine- who moved to the United States to encourage American intervention on behalf of persecuted European Jews (Wyman & Medoff, 2002: Xiii). Bergson's group lobbied Congress, organised public rallies, and importantly for this study, designed newspaper adverts.

One advert for the Bergson Committee appeared in *The New York Times* on February 8<sup>th</sup> 1943. It was headlined "ACTION- NOT PITY CAN SAVE MILLIONS NOW!" and used the whole of page eight. The advert differed in that it was predominantly textual, but had readers read this they would have been told of the deaths of two million Jews already, the existence of 'slaughter-houses' at Kowno and Belzec, and the use of gas chambers at Belzec. The information presented in the advert was very factual yet the language was very emotive, perhaps to encourage readers to pledge a donation to the Committee's efforts using the attached coupon. It may also have acted to encourage readers to pressure the American government into action.

Another Bergson Committee advert appeared later that same month, on February 26<sup>th</sup> 1943. This was headed "GERMAN POSTAL AUTHORITIES NOW USE A STAMP WHICH READS 'Died in the course of liquidation of the Jewish Problem'". The advert promoted the Madison Square Garden meeting scheduled for March 1<sup>st</sup> and encouraged American action. The advert reinforced the point that in the same way Hitler had created 'total war'; he was now carrying out 'total murder' against the civilians of occupied territories. Poignantly, the advert stated "These are not atrocity stories. They are bitter facts attested by authoritative sources of information". Whilst this may not have completely convinced readers, it certainly would have partly acted to reassure them that these reports were not falsehood in the same vein as the reports of German atrocities in Belgium during the First World War.

Unique to *The New York Times* was the appearance of a special story written by Arthur Koestler- a native Hungarian author- on January 9<sup>th</sup> 1944. The article appeared in *The New York Times Magazine* under a headline "The Nightmare That Is a Reality". *The New York Times Magazine* was used to focus and expand on important news issues and was written mostly by the newspaper's staff (Leff, 2000: 69). The story began on page five and continued on page thirty. Disturbingly, the top half of page five featured a cartoon of Hitler talking to



Himmler with nonchalant expressions on the faces of both whilst in the background five bodies, including one woman, were hanging. The caption underneath the cartoon read “The greatest mass killing in history goes on daily, hourly, as regularly as the ticking of your watch”. The story came from London, where Koestler said he had been lecturing troops for three years yet they still failed to believe in the existence of concentration camps, and they had not heard of Lidice, Treblinka or Belzec. How true the latter was is debatable, as Chapter One shows that *The Times* was reporting on the existence of concentration camps before this stage of the war, and so had troops read the newspapers they should have some knowledge of these sites. Koestler importantly raised the issue of believability of the atrocity stories. He wrote about how the magnitude of the murders affected trust in the figures of those killed, writing “Seventeen is a figure which I know intimately like a friend; fifty billions is just a sound. A dog run over by a car upsets our emotional balance and digestion; a million Jews killed in Poland cause but a moderate uneasiness.” This supports Yehuda Bauer’s claim that newspaper readers may not have been able to comprehend the scale of Nazi murders, and so did not really ‘know’ of the crimes until they saw pictorial evidence (see Introduction). By this stage of the war, at a time when Allied governments had openly condemned Nazi atrocities and the War Refugee Board had been established, there could have been little doubt in the minds of readers that these news stories were atrocity propaganda. Sadly, by this stage of the war, ninety percent of Hitler’s Jewish victims were already dead (Groth, 2011: 136), meaning rescue efforts were limited in scope. Koestler’s article importantly reinforced that they were reality and also likely played on the emotions of readers by openly asserting that such huge death tolls should not be dismissed simply because they were unprecedented.

Similarly to *The Times*, *The New York Times* did not absolutely diminish the importance of Holocaust or other atrocity news through its placement of this news. The newspaper did, albeit rarely, present some of this news on its front page. This is especially true of the January 29<sup>th</sup> 1940 story on mass shootings in Poland which also mentioned Jews as victims. On the other hand, some Holocaust-related news was placed towards the back of the newspaper and amongst large adverts which were likely to distract readers’ attention. Why editors took the decisions to present atrocity news in these ways will be examined in the next two chapters.

### **Chapter Three: Factors Influencing *The Times*' Placement of Holocaust- Related News**

There are a number of factors which surely played on the minds of the *Times*' editorial board when deciding how and where within the newspaper to present Holocaust-related news.

A commonly-cited reason why so many people failed to believe the reports of Nazi atrocities emerging from Occupied Europe is their experience of atrocity propaganda in the First World War. During the First World War, the British press presented enemy atrocities in graphic propaganda posters to stir up hatred and encourage soldiers to continue fighting against evil. More importantly, the British government published the influential Bryce Report in May 1915. The 'Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages' was the result of an investigation, led by Lord Bryce, into alleged German atrocities against Belgian civilians during German occupation. The 360-page pamphlet detailed a 'summary of evidence' of the execution of civilians, the torture and mutilation of women, and the bayonetting of small children by German forces (Sanders & Taylor, 1982: 143). It was published in thirty languages in May 1915 (Zeman, 1978: 10), showing its wide scope and audience. However, post war investigations revealed the Bryce Committee to be lax in evidence (Aulich, 2007: 17) and these atrocities to be mainly falsehood. Newspaper audiences in the Second World War were aware of this and so acted cautiously and sceptically to early reports of German atrocities a second time around. Many were determined not to be deceived into believing such horror stories. Likewise, newspaper editors shared this scepticism and were likely to treat any such stories which landed on their desks with caution. This helps to explain why in the early stages of the war, some Holocaust-related news was 'hidden' on the pages of *The Times*, as editors were aware that they may not have been believed.

This lack of belief is illustrated by the November 1<sup>st</sup> 1939 article headlined "THE DARK AGE: GERMAN WITNESSES IN ENGLAND". This was in fact a lengthy letter from Sir George Bonner (a barrister) and five of his colleagues, which began on page nine and continued on the next page. It detailed the position of 3,600 'enemy aliens' in the Reich; all of whom Bonner stated were Jews. The letter stated that families were being separated and sent to concentration camps. Disgustingly, under a sub-heading "THE BOX OF ASHES", it was reported that the supposed remains of one man who had been sent to a concentration camp were taken to his family home with the demand for 500 Reichsmarks- "the cost of cremation". Whilst it is arguable that the story was not hidden much as it was given space

across two pages, this can be countered with the fact that it was the last of the letters to appear in *The Times* on that date, and it began on the far-right side of page nine. On page ten, it concluded just above the latest Foreign Office appointments, which readers may not have paid great attention to unless they had a special interest in these. A more prominent position for the letter would have been either nearer the front of the newspaper- as letters did appear during most of the war period- or as the first letter on the page so that it immediately attracted the attention of readers. Perhaps *The Times*' editors were slightly sceptical about the accuracy of Bonner's statements, and so chose not to give the letter such prominence. The letter may have partly attracted space over two pages because of Bonner's reputable profession, meaning there would be some inclination to trust his reports. The placement of this letter is interesting given that just six weeks after it appeared, *The Times* published a 'Special Article' reporting an extermination plan for all Jews under German control (see Chapter One).

According to Goldman, British reluctance to back an official declaration on Nazi atrocities early in 1942 was partly due to Foreign Office officials who were sceptical of emerging atrocity reports because of the rhetorical overkill of World War One propagandists. They were adamant to take a more cautious approach in the Second World War and only steady public pressure coupled with increasing press revelations persuaded them to issue a statement (Goldman, 1984: 44) in December 1942. This is supported by Stola, who claims that the delayed reaction to news of the Holocaust was caused to a large extent by insufficient evidence and widespread disbelief, rather than a deliberate policy (1997: 21). Evidently, First World War atrocity propaganda weighed heavily on the minds not only of government officials, but also of newspaper editors and the general public- all of whom were determined not to be deceived for a second time.

The unprecedented scale of the Holocaust also meant that many newspaper readers were sceptical of atrocity reports that were in fact true. Whitaker states that people seldom admit to being easily influenced by newspapers, yet they remain a primary source of news. When deciding which news to believe, some degree of credibility is involved: does it seem likely than an event could have happened in the way described and is the source trustworthy? (Whitaker, 1981: 9-10). Whilst *The Times* was in fact a highly regarded source of news, the idea that millions of Jews were being systematically murdered through previously unknown means would have seem incomprehensible to many Britons. Even prominent Jewish organisation leaders initially had difficulty comprehending the Holocaust. In May 1942 when the Jewish Labor Bund smuggled a report out of Poland warning that the Nazis had

“embarked on the physical extermination of the Jewish population”, Leon Kubowitzki of the World Jewish Congress dismissed this report. He is quoted as saying “Such things do not happen in the 20<sup>th</sup> century” (Museum of Jewish Heritage, NY, 2012). The ordinary British public can therefore be forgiven for experiencing difficulty believing in atrocity stories. In a survey carried out in December 1944, one respondent stated (about the atrocity reports) “I knew they were true. But seeing the pictures of them makes a great difference” (Caven, 2001:244). This highlights the difference in knowing something, but not processing that knowledge as a reality (see Introduction). In the initial stages of the war especially, news editors may not have believed emerging reports from Poland and so chose to report these stories in less prominent ways.

One story which illustrates a high, and unbelievable, death toll appeared on August 7<sup>th</sup> 1942 under a headline “1,000,000 JEWS KILLED”. The story quoted a statement by the World Jewish Congress in which it was stated that 1,000,000 of 7,000,000 European Jews under Nazi occupation had been murdered. How they had been killed was not reported, perhaps because the methods were unknown or because there was a fear that reporting this would diminish the reliability of the story. Whilst it appeared on the Home News page (page two), the story was placed below the fold and was very short in length; consisting of just two paragraphs. Moreover, it appeared just before a story reporting the restoration of a small organ in St Paul’s Cathedral and under a story on the annual meeting of the King Edward’s Hospital Fund in London. Its placement and length reveals that in the minds of *Times* editors, it was considered either to be marginal news or beyond comprehension to most readers, and so not worthy of more prominence. This is saddening given the likely accuracy of the report.

Another possible reason why editors of *The Times* were cautious of the placement of some Holocaust-related news was the fear of an increase in anti-Semitic attitudes in Britain. There had been great sympathy for persecuted German Jewry in the aftermath of Kristallnacht in November 1938, in the form of welcoming Jewish emigration into the British Empire and Palestine. The ‘Kindertransport’ programme, through which several thousand German children were brought to Britain, was introduced at this time (Lawson, 2010: 105). However, practicality soon crept into debates. For example, economic implications such as a realisation that refugees would take jobs off Englishmen at a time of already high unemployment in Britain, and the burden of taxation which the British public would be made to pay (Goldman,

1984: 38). Whilst the British Union of Fascists had failed to gain mass support throughout the 1930s (Goldman, 1984: 37), it was feared that for above reasons, mass immigration would lead to a growth of the movement. Likewise, the Foreign Office was also keen to avoid creating sympathy for persecuted Jews because it feared this might undermine enforcement of the 1939 White Paper which curtailed Jewish immigration to Palestine (Cesarani & Burman, 1998: 11), leading to the problems mentioned above.

Furthermore, some indication of the existence of anti-Semitism is evident through analysis of public opinion polls. A British public opinion poll of November 1940 revealed that twenty percent of those questioned believed anti-Jewish feelings were increasing amongst those they knew, and by January 1943 this had risen to twenty-five percent (BIPO, 1943: VAR: ANTIJEW). Clearly the war was radicalising the perspectives of some Britons towards Jews. Fear of anti-Semitism permeating society to reach even half the extent in Britain as in Germany may have played on the minds of newspaper editors.

The British government was fully aware of this. As far into the war as the Bermuda Conference many in government were apprehensive that an increase in Jewish emigration into Britain would increase anti-Semitism. Even the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, a lifelong supporter of Zionism, argued along these lines. Following the Allied Declaration of 1942, Morrison agreed that Britain could only reasonably accept one or two thousand more Jews if the United States and Dominions accepted proportional numbers. He warned there was “considerable antisemitism under the surface” in Britain and that a large increase in Jewish refugees would bring “serious trouble” (Goldman, 1984: 45). As late as July 1944, Morrison remained fixed to this attitude, writing to a counterpart at the Foreign Office “it is essential that we should do nothing at all which involves the risk that the further reception of refugees here might be the outcome” (Lawson, 2010: 110). The existence of a clear anti-Semitic attitude at this time is evident through an incident at Bethnal Green London Underground station on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1943. During an air raid, one hundred and seventy-three people were trampled on and suffocated to death. Rumours that Jews were responsible for the stampede led to scapegoating and the government having to disprove the rumours (Goldman, 1984: 42). The existence of a fairly large Jewish community in East London is likely to have led to the development of this scapegoating, and further emigration into the area would have dangerously reinforced such attitudes.

This air of Jewish scapegoating even extended to blaming Jews for the war. The British government's desire to avoid accusations of fighting a 'Jewish war' was hampered by the appearance of a leaflet in London in 1943 which read "Jews war- They plan it, make it, finance it, and you fight it" (Goldman, 1984: 39). The apparent lack of action by Jewish groups in Britain can thus be forgiven to some extent because of a possible fear of stirring up anti-Semitism. However, as Maurice Rosette of the Jewish Agency remarked in February 1944: "Eleanor Rathbone has privately from time to time expressed amazement at the way in which we are dealing with the situation here... I know that there has been no public appeal, and, therefore, perhaps the man in the street cannot be blamed, but we, who are responsible, and I include myself without hesitation, should have done more..." (Wendehorst, 2012: 36). Evidently, British-based Jews were conscious of how their reaction to news of Jewish extermination was being portrayed, yet they generally struggled to find realistic solutions.

Perhaps sensibly, editors did not want to be portrayed as pursuing the Jewish cause by constantly publishing large and prominent stories on their plight in Europe as this could stir up anti-Semitism closer to home. This was even more so the case for *The New York Times* (see Chapter Four). On the other hand, lengthy and emotive pieces on the Jewish situation could have worked to dissuade anti-Semitism by stirring up more sympathy for those facing extermination. On balance, it seems as though the British general public was understandably more concerned about the impact of mass Jewish immigration on their own lives during the war and open acts of sympathy were hidden.

A letter from A.V. Hill which appeared in *The Times* on April 26th 1943 acutely reveals the concerns of the British public that large scale immigration into the United Kingdom would negatively affect the population. Specifically headed "JEWISH REFUGEES", the letter firstly expressed the common concern that mass immigration would strain food supplies at a time of rationing before turning to calculate that the impact would in fact be marginal. Hill concluded that the British tradition of hospitality should not be conceded for something as small as an extra ration of 12 oz. of wheat flour per annum. In contrast to the aforementioned wartime scapegoating and Jew-baiting, Hill's letter reveals the existence of some sympathy towards persecuted European Jews. Unfortunately, Hill's perspective seems to have been overshadowed by other concerns of the British public.

The vast majority of *Times* readership was more likely to be concerned about war news relating directly to Britain and its Allies, as this news unmistakably affected their lives.

Following the fall of France in June 1940, Britain began to prepare for a seemingly inevitable German attack. Predictions for such an attack in the South-Eastern region led to the evacuation of children from cities such as London, and the formation of the Home Guard. Heavy bombing raids in major industrial cities such as London, Manchester and Coventry in the final months of 1940 left 40,000 people dead (Isaacs, 1973). Given this context, Rogers states that the plight of European Jewry was considered a low priority and subordinate to news concerning the war effort (1999 (a):3). Overy likewise states that hatred of Hitler and ‘Hitlerism’ was at the heart of the Allied war effort, and sums up Churchill’s personal hatred of the Fuhrer in his quote “we have but one aim and one single, irrevocable purpose. We are resolved to destroy Hitler and every vestige of the Nazi regime” (1996: 286). The government’s prime concern was evidently to win the war, which would thence save persecuted Jews from Nazi crimes. This attitude was echoed by Washington officials, who likewise believed that any attempted rescue of Jews would only complicate the war effort (Wistrich, 2003: 207). This can explain why news stories about Nazi atrocities were sometimes less prominently presented in comparison to news on British forces, and American forces (see Chapter Four). A concern for the British war effort amongst *Times* editors was likely to be heightened by the bombing of Printing House Square on the night of September 25<sup>th</sup> 1940. Fortunately no one was killed and the newspaper’s production was halted for just eighteen minutes (Walker, 1982: 46), leading Neville Chamberlain to send a congratulatory letter to the editorial team, reading “Just a line to send you my sympathy upon your misfortune in being bombed and to congratulate you upon getting to press all the same. It is a great achievement, but only what one expects from The Times” (Wrench, 1955: 429). *The New York Times* was similarly quick to print a tribute to *Times* staff in London for their efforts in ensuring the newspaper continued to be printed (Wrench, 1955: 431). Regardless, *Times* staff were surely left shaken by the event, and as a result deemed war news more important than atrocity stories.

The attitudes of *The Times*’ editors undoubtedly influenced its coverage of the Holocaust. When John Jacob Astor purchased the newspaper for £1, 580,000 alongside John Walter IV in October 1922, he sought methods to stabilise the newspaper (Times Newspaper Limited, 1971: 766-767). Because of this, and his occupation of standing as MP for Dover, Astor allowed Geoffrey Dawson (then a former *Times* editor and friend of the Astor family) a ‘free hand’ to conduct his side of the newspaper as he thought was best to do so (Times Newspaper Limited, 1971:782). Dawson was therefore in effect free to publish news stories according to

his best judgement, with minimal interference from *The Times*' proprietors. This differs to the case of *The New York Times*, where Arthur Sulzberger was both a member of the newspaper-owning family and an editor for the newspaper. Upon purchase of the newspaper, Astor declared in a statement outlining policy: "The function of a paper like *The Times* is not to enter into rivalry with the Government of the day or to usurp for the benefit of its readers a party's prerogative of formulating political programmes. It will lean as far as possible to the support of the Government of the day and especially so when the Government is the spokesman of the nation in international affairs" (Sinclair, 1983: 312). At the outbreak of war, *The Times* therefore projected support for the government's wartime decisions, and would have been unlikely to criticise inaction towards saving Jewish refugees. Dawson had taken the attitude that the way to preserve peace was to modify the harsh terms of the Treaty of Versailles in a way generous to Germany (Howard, 1985: 107). Moreover, he disliked featuring anything which he called "waffle" or "idle speculation" (McDonald, 1984: 466). He was therefore also likely to be cautious about publicising details of atrocities being carried out by the Nazi government, who he appeared not to want to upset, and of which he had little concrete evidence. The regularity at which Holocaust-related news appeared was likely to have been influenced by these attitudes and Dawson's 'free hand' in commanding publication of *The Times*. Dawson also advocated greater British military might in the face of increasing German strength in the 1930s, and his chief concern during the war was the conduct of the war itself (McDonald, 1984: 30), which explains the prioritisation of this on the Imperial and Foreign pages. When Dawson retired as *The Times*' Editor-in-Chief in 1941, he was succeeded by Barrington-Ward; a devoutly Christian Tory who flung the paper behind the war effort (Walker, 1982: 46). Barrington-Ward was most concerned by the organisation of peace at home and abroad (McDonald, 1984: 30), meaning even more news of the Home Front was likely to be reported under his tenure. Holocaust-related news would therefore remain relegated in terms of presentation.

Another possible reason why atrocity news was scarcely and less prominently reported, especially in the earlier stages of the war, was because news of Nazi measures against Jews had been reported throughout the 1930s. In November 1938 Kristallnacht received adequate coverage in the British press. By the time war broke out in September 1939, there was an inclination that the British public was aware of some degree of Jewish persecution. A letter which appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* stating "The facts of the brutal treatment of the Jews and opponents of the Nazis are well known ... and it does not serve any purpose of



information to repeat them now, months after the event, with the authority of the government” illustrates this (Caven, 2001: 229). This may have also been the attitude of *Times* readers and editors, who were most concerned about the war effort and believed that British newspaper readers were already informed on the treatment of Jews under the Nazi regime.

Many readers of *The Times* were likely to have had friends or relatives serving with the British forces, and so news of any events involving British forces would be more concerning than news of atrocities against civilians in Occupied Europe. An opinion poll carried out by the British Institute of Public Opinion in March 1940 revealed that twenty-seven percent of respondents had been separated from a family member or fiancé because of war service. By July 1942 this had risen to forty percent. A December 1941 poll indicated that forty-three percent of those questioned had brothers serving in the Army, and thirty-eight percent had sons at war (BIPO, 1941: VAR: RELARMY). Moreover, with the British army, naval and air force death toll for the Second World War calculated to total 264,433 (Gilbert, 2000: 746), readers were surely anxious of any news which could bring news of the death of a relative or friend. Newspaper editors were surely aware of this, and they too may have had loved ones away on service, meaning they felt it more important to give prominence to news of British war progression. After all, this would have been one reason why the general public chose to read newspapers during wartime.

This concept is supported through the placement of “MORE TERRORISM IN POLAND” (June 16<sup>th</sup> 1942), which appeared on the second page of war news as the third story in the column. Stories given more prominent positions on the page indicate the concerns of the British public. These included news of the aerial bombing of Darwin in Australia (part of the Commonwealth and where readers may have had friends or family living); Roosevelt’s quarterly report to Congress on Lend-Lease (likely to affect British army supplies); and U.S. bombers (Allied forces) attacking a Japanese war ship. The choice of term ‘more’ in the headline also indicates that news had already been published regarding terror in Poland, so it was not a new event worthy of more prominent positioning. Instead, new events reporting British war progress were more important to communicate to readers, in the minds of editors.

The presentation of any news was to some extent dictated by wartime restrictions. Just as under the 1914 Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) in the First World War, the press during

the Second World War faced restrictions, notably shortening the length of newspapers and censoring news which may have assisted the enemy. In the same way that food and luxury items were subject to rationing, paper was likewise rationed. This meant a reduction in the length of newspapers, with *The Times* shrinking to an average of between eight and ten pages. Pre-war, *The Times*' average length was around twenty-six pages. By October 1941, paper rationing had taken effect and the newspaper was cut to a maximum of just ten pages. This was in contrast to *The New York Times*, which was able to boast an average of forty pages throughout the war (see Chapter Four). A small newspaper did not seem to bother readers who were more concerned about the price, as revealed by a November 1939 opinion poll. Three quarters of respondents stated that if daily newspapers were compelled to decide between a newspaper with fewer pages but remaining at the cost of 1d, or a newspaper with the same number of pages but with a price increase to 1 ½ d, the former would be their preference (BIPO, 1939: VAR: NEWPPCST). Furthermore, when faced with the decision in March 1940 whether to cut the number of pages or number of copies of *The Times*, Editors Dawson and Barrington-Ward agreed that it was better to keep the personality of the newspaper by continuing to publish its features than provide only a shadow of its former self. The number of copies printed by *The Times* was thus cut by one-sixth, affecting circulation numbers (McDonald, 1984: 63). Editors ultimately faced the challenge of publishing vast amounts of wartime news in a shorter newspaper than they were used to. This meant that they were unable to dedicate as much space as they ordinarily would to some news, and links to the notion above about which stories would most interest readers.

It was decided in 1939 that, as with the First World War, press censorship would operate on a voluntary basis (Cull, 2003: 72). Editors would be invited to submit in advance any material which they were concerned may violate the defence regulations (Taylor, 1999: 157). Defence Regulation 3 in particular made it an offence to 'obtain, record, communicate or publish information which might be of military value to the enemy' (Whitaker, 1981: 64). On 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1939, the Press and Censorship Bureau was established to conduct news censorship separately from the Ministry of Information (MOI). This was a short-lived affair, lasting just six months before the MOI was handed complete control of censorship. Wartime censorship in Britain was greatly successful, partly due to the close working arrangements of journalists and censors at a London University building in Bloomsbury. Here, journalists for major newspapers and agencies shared a floor with censors. The chief censor, Rear-Admiral George Thompson, even stressed in his memoirs: "The fact that they worked in adjacent rooms did a

great deal to foster goodwill, co-operation and friendly relations between them, which developed to an ever increasing extent as the war went on” (Thompson, G.P : 1947 in: Whitaker, 1981: 65). This close relationship may have acted as a barrier against tension, as even when censors had recommended against publication of an article, newspaper editors were under no compulsion to oblige. Should the article be published and accusations of aiding the enemy be made, the onus was then on the government to prove this (Taylor, 1999: 172).

In 1940, some guidelines were established which set out what was to be censored. First was that censors could only ban information which would aid the enemy in its military effort. The second was that only facts, not opinions, comments, or speculation could be censored. Amongst the information that could be banned were weather forecasts, as these could aid enemy forces planning to attack. Weather could not be reported until ten days had elapsed but could be guessed through the postponement of sporting events (Whitaker, 1981: 65-66). As would be expected, misleading or false information was to be curbed. Sir John Reith, the head of the MOI, insisted in January 1940 that propaganda should tell “the truth, nothing but the truth and, as near as possible, the whole truth” (Cull, 2003: 72). However, on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1942, censorship of opinion and comment was introduced into the House of Commons because of governmental and Foreign Office concern that nothing should impede the war effort; either by injuring foreign relations, shaking governmental confidence or disrupting national unity. According to Rogers, this restricted atrocity information being made public (1999 (b): 98-99). These new limitations may partially explain why *The Times* was unable to consistently publish Holocaust-related news, yet the newspaper’s greatest coverage of Nazi atrocities came after this stage of the war (see Conclusion).

An example of how the British government influenced what atrocity news was reported is provided by Professor Richard Breitman. Breitman has shown that whilst British intelligence knew about the activities of the Einsatzgruppen in the summer of 1941, this information was not released for fear that the Germans would discover that their codes had been broken. In doing so, the war effort would have been compromised, and the war may have possibly been extended (Grobman, 2003: 381). This news was therefore concealed from the press; meaning only those working in the British government were aware of the extent of the Einsatzgruppen’s killing sprees. This is a rare example of the British public being uninformed of an important development within the Holocaust, but appears to have been worthwhile given the alternative was German awareness of their codes being intercepted.

The issue of censorship did appear in *The Times* as part of the story headed “VALUE OF NEWS IN WAR-TIME” which appeared on the Home News page of January 14<sup>th</sup> 1942. This reported the annual general meeting of the Empire Press Union, held at *The Times*’ headquarters. On the issue of censorship, the point was raised that nothing should be left out except that which may be of use to the enemy or pose a national security risk. Interestingly, criticism and comment on policy was welcomed- meaning there was no reason why news on Jewish persecution and an apparent lack of government policy should not have been repeatedly reported. This supports the above point that only facts were to be censored, as well as indicating a desire for the retention of as much freedom of press as possible during wartime. This was a popular opinion amongst the British public, as indicated by a British Institute of Public Opinion poll from July 1940. In response to the question “Do you think that stricter control and censorship of the Press by the Government would be wise?” over sixty-percent of respondents stated “unwise” as their answer (BIPO, 1940: VAR: CCPRESS). Evidently, newspaper readers were keen not to have any news hidden from them and trusted that censors were doing an adequate job of ensuring that useful information was not reaching the enemy.

The sources of the news emerging from Occupied Europe may also have influenced the attitudes of *Times* editors about how the stories should be presented. Reports from journalists employed by the newspaper were likely to have been deemed more accurate and believable than those from independent correspondents based in occupied countries. This is supported by the placement of a June 12<sup>th</sup> 1943 story from “a Dutch correspondent” headlined “JEWISH STERILISATION”. The story reported that German doctors had sterilised Jewish husbands who were offered the alternative of deportation to Poland. The two sentence story’s placement below the fold on page three illustrates a lack of attention to it, which could be because it was deemed unreliable, untrue, or just unimportant to British readers. This is in contrast to “ANTI-JEWISH LAW IN FRANCE” which appeared on June 16<sup>th</sup> 1941 and *Times* editors stated as coming from “our special correspondent”. The story reported new French legislation which defined a ‘Jew’ as a descendent of three Jewish grandparents, thereby subjecting anyone who fell into this category to prohibition from working in public offices. The story’s placement mid-page in the fourth column on page three, and with considerably more column space than the Dutch correspondent’s story, indicates that it may have been deemed more trustworthy by readers and editors alike.

As shown above, *The Times* did sometimes present atrocity and Holocaust-related news in ways which did not highlight their significance because of an overarching belief that readers would be more concerned by news relating to British war progression. Censorship may have played a role in the suppression of some news reportage, particularly in the latter half of the war. Aside from governmental restrictions, expressing full knowledge of the extent of Nazi atrocities may have been something editors also wanted to avoid as the Nazi government may have responded with even harsher terms against the remaining Jews under their control, or simply dismissed the reports as atrocity propaganda- which would stimulate doubts in the minds of the British public. If this was the case, the American public would similarly be likely to react this way. This is one point that will be considered in the next chapter.

#### **Chapter Four: Factors Influencing *The New York Times*' Placement of Holocaust-Related News**

Similar to their counterparts across the Atlantic Ocean, American newspaper editors and readers were initially sceptical about believing Nazi atrocity stories because they had been deceived during the First World War. One First World War poster generated Allied support through the depiction of a German soldier crucifying a Canadian soldier alongside a slogan of “Your liberty bond will help stop this” (Aulich, 2007: 17). Such was the influence of World War One atrocity propaganda that German-Americans were violently attacked at this time (Drake, 2003: 119). In addition, editors of some American national newspapers had been journalists during the First World War, and the use of atrocity stories by both sides in the Spanish Civil War reinforced lingering doubts that emerging reports were likely to be propaganda (Leff, 2005: 6). Many Americans in the inter-war period believed that they had been deceived by British propaganda about German troops in Belgium. At the outbreak of war in September 1939, the major sentiment amongst Americans was therefore to keep out of the war, and to treat propaganda from either side as suspect propaganda (Rhodes, 1976: 139). A Gallup opinion poll from as early as November 1939 revealed that the overwhelming majority of respondents (59.63%) believed that Britain and France were carrying out propaganda in America (The Gallup Poll #177A, qn2b\_1, 11/17/1939- 11/22/1939). This attitude is only likely to have been enhanced prior to U.S. entry into the war as atrocity stories began to surface, and also stuck following America’s entry into the war. This is reinforced through the State Department’s dismissal of reports in 1942 of Hitler’s plans to exterminate all European Jews as “a wild rumour inspired by Jewish fears” (Anon, 1995: 22).

Moreover, editors and readers were doubtful about the accuracy of these reports which appeared “too terrible to be believed” (Leff, 2005: 6). In the same way that British newspaper audiences struggled to comprehend the scale of Jewish extermination carried out by the Nazis (see Chapter Three), Americans shared this disbelief. According to Lookstein, the inability to comprehend that millions of Jews were being murdered simply for being Jewish stuck in the minds of Americans no matter what was published in newspapers (1985: 208). A *New York Times* story which appeared on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1942 (“WORK ABILITY SWAYS NAZI STAND ON JEWS: ESTIMATES VARY FROM 100,000 TO 1,500,000 ON NUMBER EXECUTED”) and reported that estimates of those killed varied from 100,000 to 1,500,000,

especially seemed “too terrible and the atrocities too inhuman to be true” according to Szmul Zygielbojm. Walter Laqueur suggested this attitude influenced the placement of such stories on *The New York Times*’ inside pages: “If it was true that a million people had been killed this clearly should have been front page news; it did not, after all, happen every day. If it was not true, the story should not have been published at all. Since they (the Times editors) were not certain they opted for a compromise: to publish it, but not in a conspicuous place...” (Laqueur, 1980: 74 in: Leff, 2000: 62). The Office of War Information did not help this through directing the media to publicise smaller and verifiable atrocities such as the Lidice massacre of 1942 rather than “rumors (sic)” about the unimaginable crimes that Germany was allegedly committing against the Jews (Baron, 2010: 92), even though these unimaginable atrocities were in fact true.

This clearly had an impact on the believability of stories. As late as December 1944, the American Institute of Public Opinion asked “Nobody knows, of course, how many may have been murdered, but what would be your best guess?” Twenty-seven percent of respondents still believed that less than 100,000 had been murdered, and only one percent answered more than one million (Kalb in: Shapiro, 2003: 7). This is shocking given that the poll was conducted precisely two years after the Allied Declaration, which had stated that millions were being murdered by the Nazi regime. Furthermore, a Gallup poll conducted in 1944 not only revealed that 11% of respondents believed the reports that Germans had murdered people in concentration camps to be false, but also that the majority of those who believed this was true figured the death toll to total around 100,000 (The Gallup Poll #335, qn1a & qn1b, 11/15/1944). The fact that so many Americans remained sceptical about the numbers being murdered, despite newspaper reports on the millions being systematically murdered, is indicative of the unprecedented scale of the Holocaust.

An article written by Arthur Koestler, which appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, explicitly addressed this through his assertion that “Statistics don’t bleed; it is the detail which counts” (See Chapter Two). Koestler was directly playing on the consciences of American newspaper readers who may have read reports of atrocity stories but failed to comprehend the real scale of the killings because of the enormity of the figures cited. Some excerpts from pages of *The New York Times* during the war indicate a similar attitude amongst editors through their placement of Holocaust-related news.

“Total Nazi Executions Are Put at 3,400,000; Poland, With 2,500,000 Victims, Tops List” appeared on page twelve of *The New York Times* on February 28<sup>th</sup> 1943 as a short story at the top of columns four and five. Despite the fact that it reported that by the end of 1942 3.4 million people had been executed or died as a result of imprisonment in Nazi-occupied countries, including one million Jews, the story was not placed in a prominent position within the newspaper. To some extent, this may have been because a belief amongst editors that such numbers would not be believed by readers. This is regrettable given the likelihood of such statistics being correct. According to Christopher Browning, by February 1943 only 20-25% of Holocaust victims were still alive (Birmingham Holocaust Education Committee: 149).

Furthermore, an interesting letter to the newspaper headlined “Propaganda Still Feared” appeared on December 10<sup>th</sup> 1942, and revealed a common belief that Americans viewed atrocity stories as propaganda. Maria Zawadzka (who claims to have lived in Poland for ten months) stated in her letter that Americans who heard her stories from her time in Poland exclaimed “Then it’s true what we are reading about German atrocities- and I thought it was all just propaganda”. Zawadzka suggested this may be the result of “exaggerated Allied propaganda” during the First World War, supporting the claim that readers dismissed the stories to avoid being deceived for a second time.

This is further reinforced by “EX-PRISONER OF NAZIS TELLS OF ATROCITIES: Stories Coming From Europe Are Not Propaganda, He Says”, which appeared on June 10<sup>th</sup> 1943. The report came from Constantin Joffe, author of a book on French POWs. Referring to a Gallup poll which revealed that a large percentage of Americans still believed the atrocity stories to be false, Joffe’s experience of nine months internment in a concentration camp was reported, as were his physical scars which proved this. On one hand, readers may have been inclined to believe Joffe because he was likely to have witnessed first-hand the situation in Occupied France, yet if American newspaper audiences initially believed that France and Britain were propagandising in America (see above), there was no reason why they should have believed Joffe’s report.

Despite the fact that *New York Times* readers were being told that emerging atrocity stories were not false, there is little evidence to suggest that their attitudes were changing. This is pinpointed through the fact that as late as 1944, some Americans still failed to believe in the murder of civilians at concentration camps, and even less so in the figures being commonly



cited. It cannot be known whether pushing such stories more often, and in more prominent stories, would have altered this attitude. However, this was something Arthur Sulzberger was keen to avoid doing.

Despite its reputation of being a leading ‘national’ newspaper, *The New York Times* sometimes lagged behind other American newspapers in its reportage of the Holocaust. For example, it failed to report much about Einsatzgruppen killing sprees in Soviet territories after June 1941. This was in contrast to newspapers and magazines which served the American Jewish community, and which were able to report accurate accounts of the atrocities being committed against Jews under Nazi control (Leff, 2005: 123). According to Leff, the reasons for a lack of news on the Einsatzgruppen’s activities include the difficulty in obtaining first-hand accounts of these because of the Einsatzgruppen’s concentration near to Front lines which were inaccessible to reporters; and secondly the Soviet government operated a strict censorship policy which meant that wartime reporting from Moscow was virtually impossible (2005: 123-124). Simply reporting the existence of the Einsatzgruppen is something which *The New York Times* should be credited for, given *The Times*’ inability to do so (see Chapter Three).

Historians such as Tifft and Jones have argued that this lag behind other American newspapers was because the Sulzberger family were determined to avoid having *The New York Times* labelled as a ‘Jewish newspaper’. The newspaper was owned by Jews of German ancestry, who most observers would think would be more sensitive to the plight of their European brethren. The Sulzbergers were fully aware of the desperate situation in Occupied Europe, having tried to help extended family members escape the Nazis (Feldstein, 2006: 712). This Jewish ownership, and determination to avoid having the newspaper labelled as inherently Jewish, began with Adolph Ochs’ ownership of the newspaper in the late nineteenth century. Ochs’ refusal to permit *The New York Times* to take the lead in freeing the Jewish French army captain who had been wrongly court-martialled during the Dreyfus Affair exemplifies this attitude. Ochs later explained “I thought it would be unwise for The New York Times to begin the campaign, as it would be at once attributed to a Jewish interest” (Tifft & Jones, 1999: 94). His sentiment was echoed by his son-in-law, Arthur Hays Sulzberger during the Holocaust. Sulzberger was vigilant to the anti-Semitic press’ statement that ‘Times’ spelt backwards was ‘Semit(e)’, and when *Time* referred to the newspaper as the “Jewish-owned New York Times”, Sulzberger wrote to the proprietor, Henry Luce, insisting that the phrase implied the newspaper was biased (Tifft & Jones, 1999: 217). He even forced

one soon-to-be *New York Times* editor to refuse an award from a Jewish organisation (Lipsky, 2005: 71); such was his determination to avoid the newspaper being viewed as 'Jewish'. However, in an attempt to avoid having his newspaper labelled this way, Sulzberger missed the opportunity to utilise the newspaper's reputation to focus a spotlight on one of the greatest human crimes in history (Tifft & Jones, 1999: 215). Given the influence *The New York Times* held over other daily American newspapers, Sulzberger also missed the opportunity to promote greater press coverage of the Holocaust nationwide. Wyman believes a perception that the Jewish-owned *New York Times* did not think the mass killing of Jews was worth emphasising could have influenced other newspaper editors who looked to the newspaper for foreign policy guidance (1984: 323).

Arthur Sulzberger had experienced anti-Semitism when he studied at Colombia University through his rejection by fraternities (Tifft & Jones, 1999: 215). To some extent, his desire to prevent fellow Jews from experiencing similar embarrassment and discrimination is shown through *The New York Times*' printing of job advertisements during his tenure, which included words such as "restricted" and "clientele"- euphemisms for 'No Jews allowed'. He only stopped this practice in 1943 when Frank S. Hogan (District Attorney for New York Council) informed him that it was illegal (Tifft & Jones, 1999: 216). Furthermore, according to Khan, it was Sulzberger's fear of rampant anti-Semitism which informed his decision not to use *The New York Times* to report to the world the crimes being committed in Germany and occupied territories (Khan, 2007:166). Similar to London editors, Sulzberger therefore attempted to prevent the spread of anti-Semitism, which constant news of Jewish persecution in Europe may have fuelled if it had led to 'rescue' efforts in the form of immigration.

There can be no fair accusations that *The New York Times* failed in its responsibilities as a newspaper to keep the public informed of news events such as the Holocaust. The newspaper did report crucial developments such as the Allied Declaration of December 1942 through prominently-placed stories. Sulzberger even hired Bernard Richards, head of the Jewish Information Bureau and a Lithuanian journalist, to keep him informed on 'Jewish issues' for \$100 per month. Richards was a Zionist friend of Arthur's father Cyrus, but Arthur considered him to be reliable and impartial (Tifft & Jones, 1999: 220). Evidently, the editorial board were interested in Jewish issues, but there was a recognition that their readers in the main would not have been to the same extent.

Sulzberger may have purposely acted inconsistently in editing *The New York Times*' news stories on atrocities against Jews because he did not want the newspaper to be accused of exaggerating the situation to make the plight of European Jews seem worse than it was, or to project the war as a 'war to save the Jews'. Even a high-ranking Polish Military Intelligence Officer wrote "The Jews are the best newspaper men in the world. Winning the Jewish world over (to the Polish cause) could facilitate our (propaganda) actions in the Allied countries tremendously" (Rogers (b), 1999: 93). A perception that the Jewish press would use propaganda to exaggerate a situation to gain support perhaps made Sulzberger more determined to distance his newspaper from the mainstream Jewish press. This partially links to the notion that a continent-wide racial extermination programme was unprecedented, meaning readers had trouble believing it to be true, and newspapers did not want to be portrayed as exaggerating the situation.

Consistently reporting developments in Hitler's 'Final Solution' also would have been likely to lead at least some readers to believe *The New York Times* was predominantly interested in Jewish issues; potentially harming the credibility, neutrality, and ultimately the national readership of the newspaper. Arthur Sulzberger resented publications which emphasised the Jewishness of people in the news (Frankel in: Shapiro, 2003: 81), and even more so, he was determined to ensure that *The New York Times* was not categorised as a Jewish newspaper under his editorship. Whilst not in America, this is exactly the image that propaganda in Vichy France aimed at portraying. Posters claimed that ninety-seven per cent of the US press was owned by Jews (Zeman, 1978: 102), perhaps in an attempt to dissuade people that Allied newspaper reports on the treatment of Jews were biased.

Similar to in Britain, there was a fear that constant news of the persecution of European Jews and calls for their rescue through emigration to America would stir up anti-Semitism or place pressure on the government to find 'rescue' solutions. Like their British counterparts, Americans worried that immigrants would take away their jobs in a nation still struggling to cope with the Depression. Jews were also hit by the Depression, with Jews in New York's fur and furniture businesses being particularly hit with economic failure (Diner, 2004: 231). The economic burden of accepting more refugees concerned many Americans in the wake of Kristallnacht when the worst phase of the 'Roosevelt Recession' saw between eight and ten million unemployed (Novick, 2001: 51), and this attitude stuck throughout the war. Even in

the post-war period, American Jews favoured the emigration of surviving European Jews to the newly-created state of Israel. Although only a fraction joined Zionist societies, most American Jews saw a Jewish homeland as the only solution to the apparent problem in Europe (Diner, 2004: 222). This attitude may have been hardened by a fear of a resurgence of anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe and American Jewry's experience of anti-Semitism in the pre-war period. As a result, most Jewish organisations recognised that this general mood in America did not favour easing immigration restrictions, and instead pushed towards a quiet, behind-the-scenes approach (Diner, 2004: 213). This quiet approach may be why news on Jewish persecution and subsequent rescue negotiations was not constantly reported in the press.

According to Leff, the US government was quiet on the atrocities being committed in Europe because it was afraid that too much attention would alienate Americans who loathed fighting a war over the Jews. Isolationist Americans believed that Jewish efforts to enlist the U.S. government in the rescue of their fellow Jews compromised America's neutrality and amounted to a Jewish campaign for Jewish interests to be waged on the lives of young American soldiers (Diner, 2004: 215). Even President Roosevelt had been keen to avoid declaring war because of the strength of this isolationist and pacifist public opinion in the U.S. (Overy, 1996: 290). Additionally, there was no consensus on what the government could do to save persecuted Jews; save winning the war as soon as possible (Leff, 2005: 6). Moreover, Tony Kushner explains there was a fear that Jews would destabilise Britain and the USA if they were allowed unfettered access, hence the premise that large-scale immigration would stir up anti-Semitism (Lawson, 2010: 108). This may explain the rejection of the proposed Wagner-Rogers Bill in 1939. This bill proposed the admission of 20,000 German Jewish refugee children into the United States, outside of the normal quotas. Opinion polls revealed Americans to oppose the idea of additional immigration, leading to dismissal of the bill (Medoff, n.d., [www.aish.com](http://www.aish.com)). It is possible that *New York Times* editors recognised that constantly hammering home news of the Holocaust would have led to increased appeals from Jewish agencies to the government- thus pressuring the government to act- and the paper did not want to be responsible for creating this pressure.

Some opinion polls reveal the existence of American anti-Semitism during the war years. As late into the war as 1944, fifty-six percent of Americans surveyed believed that Jews held too much power and influence in the United States; and twenty-four percent viewed Jews as a

“menace” to the country. Shockingly, between thirty-one and forty-eight percent would have supported or sympathised with a hypothetical anti-Semitic campaign (Lookstein, 1985: 31).

These attitudes were surely influenced by anti-Semitic radicals such as Father Charles E. Coughlin (who attracted 30 million radio listeners in the late thirties (Diner, 2004: 211)) and the ‘Mother’s Movement’. This was an amalgamation of various far-right women-only groups. United by extreme patriotism, love for sons and husbands who might be drafted into war, and a stern hatred of Communists, Jews and President Roosevelt, the movement boasted up to six million members at its peak (Jeansonne, 1999: 31.). The influence of these groups is evident through estimates that approximately one hundred and twenty one anti-Semitic organisations were established during 1933 and 1940. These organisations published hate literature, preached their views via radio, and held public meetings (Lookstein, 1985: 92). Other anti-Semitic groups carried out criminal acts such as desecrating synagogues, picketing Jewish retail establishments, and engaging in random acts of street violence against Jews in New York and Boston (Diner, 2004: 214). On the other hand, a fairly large Jewish community in New York in contrast to in London also meant a stronger bulwark against this anti-Semitism (Berrol, 1994: 144-145). Nonetheless, American newspaper editors such as Sulzberger would have sensed this hostility and would have surely wanted to avoid fuelling such attitudes, which constant news about Jews may have done. Likewise, they would not have wanted to alienate potential readers who held these views.

Evidently, the foundations of a large anti-Semitic movement were existent in America. Sulzberger in particular would have been aware of this, and may have been cautious that advancing the case of persecuted Jewry to the extent of increased Jewish immigration into America would have enhanced such attitudes. As an American Jew, he may have been fearful of the consequences and so attempted to avoid pursuing the case of persecuted Jews through constant editorials and large news stories.

In comparison to *The Times* and news of British forces, *New York Times* editors were likely to view news relating directly to American forces as more concerning to their readers than news of atrocities in occupied countries. Whilst the wartime American press may not have been able to control what the public thought, it could influence what they thought about through the stories it published (Lipstadt, 1986: 3). This is especially true for the period after America became involved in the war, when the “Jewish question” became less important

compared to the overarching goal of an Allied victory (Wistrich, 2003: 196). According to Wistrich, even American Jewish organisations did not prioritise the rescue of European Jews on their wartime agendas. They may have made a few private approaches to the President and high-ranking government officials, but these were not followed up with action (2003: 192). Roosevelt's failure to mention the extermination of the Jews in any of his press conferences until March 1944 may have led newspaper editors to believe that the issue was not an American priority (Wyman, 1998: 323). The primary concern of most Americans during the war was the safety of their husbands, fathers, brothers and friends who were serving in the U.S. armed forces. Over half of the respondents to a November 1939 Gallup Poll reported having immediate male family members of war age (The Gallup Poll #169, qn15, 09/11/1939). These family members were most probably conscripted after 1941, meaning newspaper readers were even more concerned by news on war progression. Whilst this is not to say that Americans were not concerned by the atrocities being committed by Nazi occupiers, they were understandably most interested in news reporting developments in the war which involved their loved ones. To some extent, this is shown through the reportage of Holocaust-related news in comparison to news on U.S. forces.

One example of Holocaust-related news being presented less prominently than news relating to U.S. troops is "ALLIES ARE URGED TO EXECUTE NAZIS... 'Only Way to Save Millions From Certain Destruction' Says the Appeal" (July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1942), which appeared on page six. The story reported that the London-based Polish Government-in-Exile had received a report from Szmul Zygielbojm that 700,000 Jews had been murdered in German-occupied territory. Going into explicit detail, it reported the existence of Chelmno and the use of gas chambers there as a method of mass murder. The priorities of American readers and editors can be gleaned from considering the front page's main headline on the same day:

"GERMANS REPORT CAPTURE OF SEVASTOPOL; BATTLE JOINED 70 MILES FROM ALEXANDRIA AS BRITISH MAKE STAND IN DESERT CORRIDOR". This understandably affected a majority of American readers more than news of Chelmno, as this story involved the Allied forces. Trivially, even "Lehman Ends Tennis; Shoes to Rubber Pile" was dedicated some space on the front page on this day. Arguably, the story made front page news not only because Herbert H. Lehman was the Governor of New York, but because he was contributing to the war effort through donating rubber, thus setting a precedent for other Americans involved in the Home Front and subjected to rationing.

Another interesting perspective on the prioritisation of war news comes from Novick, who suggests that limited press attention to the Holocaust was because it did not seem interesting. Novick uses the term ‘interesting’ to describe, for example, vice where virtue is expected. Americans in the Second World War period took it for granted that Nazism was the embodiment of absolute evil, meaning constant repetition of its crimes was not therefore ‘interesting’ (2001: 23-24): it was expected. This links to the notion that persecution of European Jews was ‘old news’ by the time war broke out, meaning newspaper editors believed it was better to report war progress instead. *The New York Times* had reported measures against German Jews in the 1930s, specifically ‘Kristallnacht’ in a lead editorial on November 11<sup>th</sup> 1938 whilst also featuring the event on the front page of the newspaper every day between November 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> (Lookstein, 1985: 36-37). Novick also believes that downplaying the Holocaust may have been a deliberate tactic used by the American press to keep morale high (2001: 37). This could have been in the sense of trying to avoid frightening the American public of their potential fate in the unlikely event of German occupation of the United States. On a practical level, leaving out some atrocity news granted *New York Times* editors space to report war success, boosting morale in this way.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, *The New York Times* did not face precisely the same shortage of paper that *The Times* did in London. This meant that it was able to print up to forty-seven pages during wartime, and hence report news in a more detailed manner. Given that this is the fundamental principle of newspapers, it should not be surprising that Arthur Sulzberger took the editorial decision to reject some adverts he was offered- sacrificing profits generated through advertising- so that *The New York Times* could accommodate more news on its pages. In fact, through sacrificing advertising space, the paper published 1.9 million more lines of news than any other New York paper in the first eight months of 1944 (Tifft & Jones, 1999: 207). Furthermore, during a lecture in April 1945, Sulzberger boasted that *The New York Times* published 15,000 more columns of news than any other newspaper during 1944 through sacrificing 4,500,000 lines of potential advertising space (Sulzberger, 1945: 542). Clearly Sulzberger was keen to reinforce the message that his newspaper was dedicated to delivering as much news as possible at a crucial point of the war, regardless of the potential financial rewards of accepting advertisements.

This is not to say that American newspapers did not face newsprint restrictions during the Second World War. Paper mills across America were forced to redirect their efforts towards the production of cardboard and waterproof paper for packaging materials, leaving less paper

for the press. A rationing plan known as Order L-240 was decided upon, which kept all newspapers suitably equipped without presenting an advantage to those papers which owned mills; as *The New York Times* did (Tifft & Jones, 1999: 207).

Just as British journalists were subjected to censorship restrictions, American journalists likewise worked under a system of voluntary censorship. The American press cooperated with the Federal Government at home and the military in battle zones to restrict reporting for national security reasons (Slattery & Doremus, 2012: 625). The Office of Censorship was created within days of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and closed when Japan announced it would no longer fight (Sweeney, 2001: 6). American newspaper readers were therefore not subjected to censorship any longer than the needs of war dictated; meaning freedom of speech and expression (one of the Four Freedoms) was retained as much as possible.

Under the directorship of Byron Price, US journalists were to act as their own censors. Roosevelt had made clear to reporters at a press conference on December 9<sup>th</sup> 1941 that any news stories must firstly be accurate; and secondly must not help the enemy. To gauge what information would be deemed helpful to enemy forces Price consulted the army, navy, FBI, Weather Bureau, War Production Board, Maritime Commission, and other government agencies (Sweeney, 2001: 44). American journalists were given some indication in the form of Code of Wartime Practices for the American Press, initially issued on January 15<sup>th</sup> 1942 but revised dozens of times throughout the war (Sweeney, 2001: 41). Journalists were advised to ask themselves “Is this information I would like to have if I were the enemy?” (Sweeney, 2001: 48) when writing news stories. Similar to in Britain, weather forecasts were not to be communicated except the current conditions in one state local to the newspaper (Sweeney, 2001: 49). Importantly to this study, *The New York Times* felt the code was “sensible” and said that if properly observed it would keep military secrets from the enemy whilst not infringing upon the freedom of the press (Sweeney, 2001: 52).

Seemingly an issue for American newspaper audiences was a lack of trust in what they read in newspapers, aroused by the use of censorship and the aforementioned experience of atrocity stories in the First World War. Keeping information from the enemy also meant keeping it from the American public; causing the dilemma of an ill-informed civilian population. Moreover, the US government and newspaper editors feared that the public may suspect censorship was a cover for military blunders. Journalists were thus faced with the difficult task of ensuring confidence in readers’ minds about what was printed, yet even they



greeted most efforts by the government and military to gain control over the news with anger and dismay (Sweeney, 2001: 70).

One possible reason why stories on Allied action to save persecuted Jewry were sparse is because of the Office of Censorship's revision of the Code of Wartime Practices in June 1942. A clause was added which advised a ban on news of "premature disclosure of diplomatic negotiations or conversations" (Sweeney, 2001: 65). Any low-scale discussions amongst the Allied forces regarding persecuted Jewry may therefore have been excluded from appearance in newspapers. This was acknowledged by Arthur Sulzberger in 1945 when he admitted that *The New York Times* had been in possession of much unpublished war-related information which did not make its way into the newspaper because it jeopardised national security. Amongst other examples, Sulzberger is quoted as saying "We have had fuller reports of the meetings of our so-called Big Three than were made public" (Sulzberger, 1945: 542), suggesting that the extent of the newspaper staff's knowledge was not revealed because of adherence to the aforementioned Code of Wartime Practices.

Just as with *The Times*, the sources of some Holocaust-related news may have cast doubt into the minds of *New York Times* staff about their reliability. An equal comparison for the entire Second World War period cannot be made to *The Times* as American journalists based in Europe were sent back to the United States following the attack on Pearl Harbor. *The New York Times* could not therefore place its journalists amidst the main battle zones and close to ghetto or concentration camp sites. As a result, a majority of the news stories reporting on Nazi terror are sourced as "Wireless to The New York Times" or "By telephone to The New York Times". Even the January 16<sup>th</sup> 1942 story "GERMANS BRANDED CRUEL TO RUSSIANS" which was written by Ralph Parker (a *New York Times* journalist) states that Parker received the details from a "non-Russian diplomatic source". Whilst *Times* editors appeared to have trusted reports from their own journalists more than reports from correspondents in Occupied European territory, *The New York Times* does not appear to have acted in the same vein. Those stories which were sent via wireless to the newspaper were placed in various positions within issues: some even on the front page. Evidently, there was not the same disbelief attached to them as was present in the minds of *Times* newspaper staff, and other factors appear to have been more influential in arranging the positioning of stories.

Marvin Kalb summed up why news of Nazi atrocities was presented with little prominence when he wrote: “Most journalists were like most other Americans- some anti-Semitic, some disbelieving, others indifferent. The Holocaust was not a burning story during the time of the Holocaust. Maybe too demanding a story, too mind-numbing in scope; the Holocaust could only be appreciated, if that’s the right verb, with time.” (2003: 9). As in Britain, newspaper audiences were understandably most concerned about news which affected their everyday lives or involved their loved ones away at war. This was more the “burning story” Kalb refers to. It also raises the question of whether the Holocaust would have received more prominent newspaper coverage outside of wartime, when the national survival was not the world’s main concern.

## **Chapter Five: Comparing the Reportage of Holocaust-Related News**

To some extent, the coverage the Holocaust received in *The New York Times* altered during the war's duration, particularly through the more prominent placement that news of German atrocities received later in the war. By the spring and summer of 1942, many observers began to realise that Nazi atrocity tales were not propaganda based on the same fabrications as in the First World War. According to Wyman, November 24<sup>th</sup> 1942 (when Rabbi Wise held a press conference to announce the Nazis' extermination 'solution') marked a turning point in Holocaust history, as by then news of Hitler's plan to exterminate the Jews was available to everyone who cared to know (1998: 61). Even President Roosevelt made it clear to his advisors at this time that he wanted them to keep an eye on the situation in Poland and the rest of Europe. Roosevelt backed the American Jewish Congress' rally in July 1942 (Marouf, 2003:159), and was also present at the Madison Square Garden mass meetings organised by the Bergsonite Committee.

This change in attitude was echoed by newspaper editors, and is illustrated through the page numbers that atrocity news appeared on. Whereas the most common page number used for stories in this study which were published in 1939 was page seven, by 1945, it was as close to the front as page four. Furthermore, *The New York Times* began to give more prominence to Holocaust-related news through page placement. Whereas "REICH ESTABLISHES GHETTOS IN POLAND... 60,000 Jews Reported Held at Cracow as Segregated Area Is Overcrowded" (January 6<sup>th</sup> 1940) and "NAZI PUBLICITY HERE HELD SMOKE SCREEN: Propaganda Called Cover to Destroy Democracy (25<sup>th</sup> June 1940- which explicitly stated Jews faced "annihilation") both appeared in the eighth and final column on their page, towards the war's end news moved towards the beginning of the page. One example is "2,000,000 MURDERS BY NAZIS CHARGED: Polish Paper in London Says Jews Are Exterminated In Treblinska Death House" (August 8<sup>th</sup> 1943), which appeared over the first two columns and 'above the fold'. This suggests that, following the standard journalism notions of important news near to the front of the newspaper and in the top half of the page, editors began to pay more attention to atrocity stories; perhaps because increasing evidence made it harder to dismiss them as propaganda.

This change in placement cannot be equally compared to *The Times* because of the newspaper's set structure. Most atrocity news was placed on page three as this was the dedicated 'Imperial and Foreign' page. Despite Louise London's suggestion that from June

1942 a succession of stories reporting mass executions in Poland appeared in the British press (2000: 198), *The Times*' coverage and placement of atrocity news did not change greatly. The newspaper's consistency in its reportage of the Holocaust is evident through the same placement of stories from a range of dates during the war. For example, "PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS: RECORD OF GERMAN BRUTALITY - PLAN OF EXTERMINATION (December 21<sup>st</sup> 1942) was given as much prominence on page three as "THE TROUBLES OF VICHY: DANGER OF EXTENDED OCCUPATION" (September 7th 1940), despite the gap between these dates.

As the war progressed, the quantity of stories reporting the situation of persecuted civilians in Occupied Europe increased. Whereas after September 1939 and during 1940 a total of fifty-three stories appeared in *The New York Times*, in 1942 alone sixty-three stories were printed. Along with fifty-two stories in 1943, these years represent the peak of Holocaust reporting in the newspaper. *The Times* similarly published more stories in the latter war years. Like *The New York Times*, the small figure of thirty-six stories appeared in 1939 and 1940, yet in 1942 alone a staggering ninety-eight stories appeared. Coupled with sixty-two in 1943 this again was the peak of Holocaust reportage. This increased frequency of atrocity stories suggests that because editors were more inclined to believe the reports, they chose to share this news with readers through publishing more stories. The peak in both newspapers during 1942 was also likely to be the result of an amassing of reports of the beginning of the 'Final Solution' - which is accepted by most historians to have been fully implemented in 1942 following the Wannsee Conference. Throughout this mid stage of the war, concentration and extermination camps were fully operational in Auschwitz, Belzec and Treblinka. The UN Allied Declaration (17<sup>th</sup> December 1942) could have left little doubt that news of racial persecution was propaganda. The Bermuda Conference of 1943 likewise could have encouraged editors to print more Holocaust-related news because Allied governments were under some pressure to rescue persecuted Jews where possible through accepting Jewish immigrants. News of the Holocaust was thus no more likely to pressurise the British or American governments in this way more than they already were (see Chapters Three and Four).

An interesting point of comparison between the two newspapers is the frequency at which stories appeared during certain months of the war. Both newspapers had particularly 'heavy' news months at the same time. For example, *The Times* printed eight stories important to this study in October 1941, whilst *The New York Times* printed ten; and in July 1942 *The Times* printed ten whilst its New York counterpart printed nine. This indicates that the newspapers

shared some news as these months are not particularly notable for events relating to the Holocaust yet a fair number of stories appeared in the press. News in October 1941 varied from the expulsion of Berlin Jews, the treatment of Jews in Vichy France, and the execution of Czech Jews. Likewise, in July 1942, the stories published in both newspapers featured a range of occupied regions, although there was a slight focus on Vichy Jews. This is likely to be because the first round-ups and transports of French Jews occurred in the summer of 1942. An increased frequency of stories during months of important developments in the Holocaust, such as December 1942 and April 1945 were to be expected, and this was reflected in both newspapers.

In contrast to *The New York Times*' fairly frequent printing of Holocaust-related news in February and March 1945, *The Times* was sparing. This is surprising given the landmark liberation of Auschwitz at the end of January 1945. One possible explanation is *The Times*' perception that its readers would have been most interested in news of an impending conclusion of the war. On the other hand, the appearance of stories in *The New York Times* may have been the result of guilty minds of the newspaper's editors who, in the wake and anticipation of concentration camp liberation, felt they should have reported more news earlier into the war. Moreover, the knowledge that the war was drawing to an end may have spurred them to print stories which they may have been initially hesitant to because of the fear of pressuring the government into 'rescue' action. When this was no longer the case, editors may have deemed it more appropriate to print news they otherwise were sceptical of. In addition, the end of the war may have suggested to the press an impending relaxation of censorship regulations, further encouraging them to publish news which could no longer aid the soon to be defeated enemy.

The lesser frequency of Holocaust-related stories is important to James Parkes (a priest), who claims that in the British press "we read about it at the time and then forget" seeing "only little photographs amidst the war news, and their impression passes from our memory" (Bunting, 2006: 44). This is also important in the context of truly knowing of the situation in Occupied Europe, as Parkes is suggesting that this knowledge did not stick in the minds of newspaper readers during the war.

Understandably, *The New York Times* was able to report the Madison Square Garden meetings in greater detail than *The Times*. Whilst *The Times* published just two stories on the mass meetings (on July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1942 and October 30<sup>th</sup> 1942), *The New York Times* published at

least five, including advertisements for the meetings designed by the Bergsonite Committee. This is simply due to the geographical locations of the newspapers; *The New York Times* being able to provide more detail because of its base in the same city as the meetings were held. The newspaper's readers were also more likely to be interested in the meetings than *Times* readers, because of the involvement of American politicians and notables.

Because of its geographical location across the Channel, one would expect *The Times* to have been positioned to provide frequent and lengthy stories on the situation in France. American editors could have been forgiven for doubting the accuracy of some of the tales coming from over one thousand miles away (Hamerow, 2008: 306). Yet in reality, *The New York Times* was able to provide more news on France than *The Times*. Throughout the war, a total of twenty-two stories appeared in *The Times* relating to the situation of Jews in France compared to twenty-nine in *The New York Times*. As mentioned above, the two newspapers were likely to share news, meaning *The New York Times* received news from London, which received it from France. In addition, the extra pages which were afforded to *The New York Times* meant it was able to print more news, which may explain why more stories appeared in New York. The issues of paper rationing and a desire to prioritise news most relatable to readers may have come into play in the minds of London editors.

*The Times* also fell behind in its coverage of the Holocaust through a lack of news of developments at Chelmno. The newspaper failed to report on the existence of Chelmno death camp until October 1944 despite its importance in the testing of gas as a means of mass murder, whereas *The New York Times* reported its existence in a lengthy article in July 1942. This was around seven months after the first experiments there are believed to have been conducted, but this is still two years earlier than *Times* readers were likely to have been informed of the camp's existence. By October 1944, the process of liquidation had also begun at the camp (Montague, 2011: 2), which could be why *The Times* received news of the camp. This is surprising given the base of the Polish Government-in-Exile in London for the war's duration. Had any news of Chelmno reached the Polish government, it is expected that this news would have been relayed to the news agencies and printed in British newspapers. Whether it was, but this news was ignored by *Times* editors, cannot be known.

On the other hand, *The Times*' coverage of Katyn was much more detailed. Whilst only three stories appeared in *The New York Times* reporting the discovery of 10,000 dead Polish officers at Katyn, *The Times* printed five times this amount. This is unsurprising given the

issuing of statements by the Polish government in London and the likelihood of the Polish Government-in-Exile relaying information to newspaper agencies in London. *The New York Times*' Katyn stories were also significantly shorter than *The Times*; the longest in the former being just three-quarters of one column whilst the latter dedicated three-quarters of page four to the topic on April 29<sup>th</sup> 1943.

Readers of both newspapers were reliably informed of the existence of a concentration and extermination camp in Oswiecim. The first reference to the camp appeared in *The New York Times* on March 30<sup>th</sup> 1941 in a short page nine story headlined "GESTAPO SEEN BUSY IN POLAND AGAIN... JEWS IN CRACOW SUFFER". It is interesting that the headline specifically mentioned Jews as victims, and the story mentioned their deportation; suggesting that they were the main victims at Auschwitz. *The Times*' first mention of Auschwitz appeared a few months later, on May 20<sup>th</sup> 1941. This appeared in a page four story simply headlined "GERMAN ATROCITIES IN POLAND". In contrast to in New York, *The Times* did not specify that Jews were being sent to Oswiecim, instead using the sweeping term 'Poles' to refer to camp inmates. The placement of these two stories is interesting. *The Times* chose to place its story on page four- the second page of war news- indicating high importance was not attached to the story. This is put into perspective through the inclusion of "AMERICANS CELEBRATE THEIR DAY" on page three on the same day, which was about an 'I am American' day held in Central Park. *The New York Times* failed to give its first mention of Auschwitz much prominence through placing it on page nine, although it appeared in a short story across the top of the first two columns on the page. It is possible that the extent of the atrocities committed at Auschwitz were not known at this infancy of the camp's operations, and hence editors chose not to dedicate as much prominence to news of the camp as may be expected by those who now know the notoriety of Auschwitz. This could also be why the Allies were rather inactive in their efforts to intervene in the killings at Auschwitz, as Gilbert suggests they were (1991: 340).

Both newspapers adopted the use of similar terms to describe the actions of Nazi occupiers in Europe. Both were consistent throughout the war period in their description of these actions as "atrocities", "massacres" and "murder". Similarly, both newspapers recognised Nazi actions as part of a grand plan for "annihilation" or "extermination"- the first use of the latter term occurring as early as December 1939 in *The Times* (see Chapter One). By 1940 it was apparent through the language used in reports that the Nazis were carrying out an exterminatory programme against civilians of occupied territories. Two examples include an

explicit reference to a German “war of extermination” in *The Times*’ February 5<sup>th</sup> 1940 story headlined “MASS EXECUTIONS IN POLAND” and the headline “WOMEN OF POLAND DEPICT ITS MISERY... ‘EXTERMINATION’ HELD AIM: 3,000,000 Have Been Slain or Died in ‘Living Hell’, Document Asserts”, which appeared in *The New York Times* on November 27<sup>th</sup> 1940. The language employed in both newspapers did not change during the course of war, implying that newspaper staff were aware of Nazi exterminatory intentions relatively early in the war, and secondly that their interpretation and understanding of these Nazi war crimes did not alter as the war progressed.

Interestingly, before the war’s end, both newspapers made reference to the term “Holocaust”, suggesting the term was in existence before the events to which it has now been most closely aligned were fully realised. *The Times* made reference to the term on May 9<sup>th</sup> 1944 in a story headlined “CZECH VILLAGE MASSACRE: 370 PERSONS BURNED TO DEATH”. The final paragraph of this story, describing the events in the Czech village of Cesky Malin, began “During the holocaust the Germans were burning the houses...” The term may have been employed here because of its association with sacrificial burning, as the victims here were burned to death. *The New York Times* initially used the term slightly later than *The Times*. Its first reference to a Holocaust appeared on February 11<sup>th</sup> 1945 when Eliahu Dobkin, head of the immigration department of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, was quoted as saying “Those who emerged from this holocaust of annihilation confront bleak realities and a no less grim future” under a story entitled “WORSE PLIGHT SEEN FOR EUROPE’S JEWS...ANTI-SEMITISM REMAINS”. The use of both the terms “Holocaust” and “annihilation” alongside one another again suggest that Dobkin was employing the term because of its connotations to burning, as by this stage of the war it was known that the bodies of concentration and extermination camp victims had been burned. The fact that both examples appeared within the last twelve months of the war suggest that it was during this time that observers began to label the Nazi plan of extermination as a Holocaust because of the methods used to accomplish this aim. The term ‘genocide’, as would also have been appropriate to describe Nazi actions, had not yet come into common use. Raphael Lemkin first derived the term ‘genocide’ in his 1944 work “*Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*”. Lemkin devised ‘genocide’ from the Greek word ‘genos’ (tribe, race) and the Latin word ‘cide’ (homicide, fratricide) to describe the extermination of nations and ethnic groups by invaders (Jacobs, 2004: 216)- as



the Nazis had attempted against particularly the Jewish populations in their newly-acquired territories.

The two newspapers are comparable most notably through their recognition of Allied war news as most important to their readers. To quote Wheeler, “With world war raging, the plight of the Jews wasn’t top priority for the Allied military machine, even though it was directed by men like Franklin Roosevelt, a sympathiser of the Jews, and Winston Churchill, a staunch Zionist (Wheeler, 1985: np). This was reflected through the placement of news reporting war progress in more prominent positions, and the allocation of more space to such news, in comparison to reports of atrocities. The numerous front page *New York Times* stories and the dedication of page three to war news in *The Times* illustrate this.

The similarities of Holocaust reportage in the two newspapers can be partly attributed to London and New York’s use of shared news agencies, such as Reuters and the Associated Press. These news agencies provided a pool of news from which editors of *The Times* and *The New York Times* could extract stories, leading to the appearance of similar content in the two newspapers. However, this raises the question of why and how one newspaper may have missed news which appeared in the other. This may be explained twofold. Firstly, some stories may have been directly relayed to one newspaper and not the other from another source. This is exemplified by stories written by ‘special correspondents’ based in Occupied Europe who may have been independent journalists. These journalists may have only sent their stories to one of the newspapers where they believed they were most likely to be published. Secondly, as examined in Chapters Three and Four, *The Times* and *The New York Times* were subjected to censorship and printing restrictions during the war. Editors of either newspaper would have considered these matters of column space and possible breach of regulation when deciding which stories to accept from news agencies. The fact that *The New York Times* was able to print more pages throughout the war explains why ‘more’ news appeared in this newspaper compared to *The Times*.

The coverage the Holocaust and wider range of Nazi war crimes received in *The Times* and *The New York Times* differed primarily because of the structural differences of these two newspapers during the Second World War. *The New York Times* did not maintain a set structure in terms of dedicated war news pages, as *The Times* did. The fact that some important Holocaust-related news appeared towards the very end of the newspaper was apparently not intended by Arthur Sulzberger to act as an attempt to hide this news.

According to Assistant Managing Director Turner Catledge, Sulzberger believed that if a story made it into *The New York Times*, it was just as good on page thirty-nine as page one (Tift & Jones, 1999: 218). The newspaper's strapline was, after all, "All the news that's fit to print" suggesting the entire newspaper was important.

However, this notion contradicts standard newspaper rules that the most significant stories are to be prominently placed towards the beginning of the newspaper: especially on the front page. Moreover, it subsequently raises doubt over which criterion were used to organise the newspaper. Whether this statement was an attempt by Sulzberger to justify his paper's treatment of Holocaust-related and other significant atrocity news can be debated. *The Times* did commit to the notion of the most important news appearing near the front of the newspaper, despite its set structure. Page three became a dedicated 'Imperial and Foreign' page for the war's duration. Given that page three is intended by some journalists to act as a second front page (Finberg & Itule, 1990: 80), *The Times* realised the predominant concern of its readers was war progress, and placed this news accordingly.

This difference in structure means that an equal comparison of front page stories in the two newspapers is impossible; *The Times* having reserved the front page for classified news. Instead, this study has considered the prominence of Holocaust-related news on inside pages as an indication of the importance attached to them by *Times* editors. *The New York Times* did print some news of Nazi atrocities on its front pages, often using 'jump' stories to direct readers into the newspaper for a continuation of the story, which again *The Times* did not. There is just one instance of a *Times* equivalent to this, when "LUBLIN FOR THE JEWS..." was spread over two pages on December 16<sup>th</sup> 1939 (see Chapter One).

*The New York Times'* unset structure did provide its editors with the opportunity to print some front page stories on Nazi atrocities, whereas this was denied to their London-based counterparts. Despite the fact that these front page stories most often continued inside the newspaper, the significance of a front page story cannot be underestimated given the indication they provide of the most pressing concerns of editors and readers of the newspaper. *The Times'* equivalent to a front page was the 'Imperial and Foreign' page three. It was in the first column, or as the first story in another column on this page, that fifty-three Holocaust-related stories appeared between September 1939 and May 1945. Should one wish to take this page as *The Times'* front page, this would equate to more front page stories than *The New York Times*, but this would be an unequal comparison as it was never stated that the

Imperial and Foreign page was to act as a second front page. This is simply a conclusion drawn from traditional journalistic notions and attitudes. Moreover, *The New York Times* still placed more Holocaust-related news in the first column on the page or as the first story in its column, with a total of eighty-three stories appearing in this manner during the period under investigation. *The New York Times* also published lengthier atrocity news stories than *The Times* did. Whereas *The Times* averaged one-quarter or one-third of a column, *The New York Times* printed stories that appeared shorter in one column, but were in fact longer because they continued in other columns. Overall, they therefore used more column inches. This is significant in indicating the importance attached to these stories because of the space allocated to them. *The New York Times'* ability to print more newspaper pages per issue may have also been influential here.

Readers of *The New York Times* were more informed than *Times* readers that the principal victims of Hitler's extermination campaign were European Jews. This is supported through more frequent references to Jews in the headlines of the newspaper, thus singling out Jews as victims of atrocities. In 1942 alone, thirty-seven stories in *The New York Times* included 'Jews' or a related term in their headlines. One example is "EXTINCTION FEARED BY JEWS IN POLAND..." (March 1<sup>st</sup> 1942) and "VILNA MASSACRE OF JEWS REPORTED: 60,000 Slain in Two Weeks by Police Under Nazis..." (June 16<sup>th</sup> 1942). This is interesting given Arthur Sulzberger's determination to prevent *The New York Times* from being perceived as a Jewish newspaper. Frequent references to Jews in the headlines of stories is likely to have led some readers to believe that the newspaper dealt with 'Jewish issues'; which is exactly what Sulzberger wanted to avoid. It is possible that Sulzberger did not believe that his newspaper was overwhelmingly referring to European Jews, and so perhaps felt he was succeeding in avoiding a 'Jewish newspaper' label. For purposes of comparison for this study, it is simply the case that *The New York Times* included more headline references to Jews than *The Times* did during the Second World War. Another possible explanation for the numerous headlines involving terms such as 'Jew' and 'Jewish' is the presence of a strong Jewish community in New York. By 1914 there were one million Jews living in New York- twice the Jewish population of Warsaw- (Gilbert, 2002: 30) and the American Jewish community as a whole numbered about 4.5 to 5 million during the war years (Wistrich, 2003: 191). Over half a million of these served in the US armed forces during the Second World War (Henry, 2007: 85). This is in comparison to an estimated 60,000 Jews (excluding Palestinian Jews) who served in the British forces (Wendehorst,

2012: 37). In cities with a large Jewish population, such as New York, Chicago and Boston, streets, public schools and shops resounded with Yiddish words and newsstands sold Jewish publications (Diner, 2004: 226). *The New York Times* was possibly aware of its duty to inform Jewish readers of the plight of their Jewish brethren in Europe, and so chose to explicitly refer to Jews in headlines.

In both newspapers, more stories reported the harsh treatment of Jews alongside other persecuted groups through the use of general terms such as “refugees”, “minorities” and “Poles”. Whilst these terms ordinarily have different connotations, newspaper editors used them all to refer to one group; providing an indication of the desperate situation of Jews. It would have been unsurprising for *The New York Times* in particular to use these terms given Sulzberger’s determination to prevent the newspaper from being portrayed as primarily interested in ‘Jewish issues’. Even when the war in Europe ended, *New York Times* correspondent Cyrus L. Sulzberger reported from Moscow that four million people had been killed at Auschwitz but failed to mention the inescapable fact that a majority of the victims were Jewish (Carroll, 1997:1). This determination to avoid being portrayed as a ‘Jewish newspaper’ evidently began before, and continued after, the war. London editors seemingly used the umbrella terms to cover the range of Nazi victims, possibly to avoid stirring up anti-Semitism. However, use of the term ‘refugee’ is likely to have generated some sympathy for those it was attributed to, as well as suggest some responsibility to accept them into one’s country. Given that both nations feared a resurgence of anti-Semitism resulting from an influx of immigration, this would contradict a desire to avoid stimulating this.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion**

This thesis has shown that Holocaust-related news was reported in both *The Times* and *The New York Times* in occasionally prominent and lengthy stories. However, the belief that newspaper readers were not fully aware of the extent of the atrocities being committed in Occupied Europe exists because of the prioritisation of war-related news in terms of newspaper placement. Understandably, the Second World War occupied the minds of newspaper readers, many of whom had loved ones serving in the armed forces, more than the fate of individuals to whom they had no connection or responsibility.

It has been shown that *The Times* highlighted Holocaust-related news through often placing atrocity reports on its 'Imperial and Foreign' page. Over the course of the war, this was fixed on page three- the page number traditionally considered by journalists and editors to act as a second front page. Given that *The Times* did not place news stories on its front page, this is perhaps as prominently as the newspaper could have reported such news. Just one example is the April 11<sup>th</sup> 1942 story "NEW TERROR IN POLAND" which appeared in *The Times* (See Chapter One).

*The New York Times* rarely allocated space to Holocaust-related news on its front page, but it was able to report this news in much more detail than *The Times*, which faced more stringent print restrictions. Despite Lipstadt's statement that in England coverage of the Holocaust was more comprehensive (Lipstadt, 1990: 288), fundamentally, more Holocaust-related news appeared in *The New York Times* than *The Times*. However, whilst it printed a substantial amount on Holocaust-related events, according to Wyman these were almost always 'buried' on the inside pages (1998: 321). On a basic level, one hundred and eighty-seven stories about the treatment of Jews and other persecuted groups used for this study appeared in *The Times*, compared to three hundred and thirty-nine in *The New York Times*. This is most likely to be because of reasons such as the existence of a fairly large Jewish community in New York and the ability of the newspaper to print more news because of less rigid print restrictions than in London. It is unlikely that editors of *The New York Times* knew more than those in London given the closer proximity of London editors to the scenes of persecution and the wartime base of the Polish Government-in-Exile in London.

Despite this, some historians such as Kalb remain critical of *The New York Times*' coverage of the Holocaust because of suggestions that *The New York Times* knew more than it published, and what was published was often a cut and trivialised version of what was known by editors (Kalb in Shapiro, 2003:8). Should this be true, whilst its actual coverage was arguably not sparse, the coverage the newspaper could have given the Holocaust would have been much closer to what such a singular and unprecedented event in human history deserved.

This thesis supports some of Laurel Leff's assertions in '*Buried By The Times...*', particularly her assertion that *The New York Times* did not make news of the extermination of the Jews lead news day after day, run editorials and magazine pieces on the topic, or highlight it in weekly and yearly summaries (Leff, 2000: 65). This research has shown just one instance of a Holocaust-related issue appearing in *The New York Times*' magazine (Koestler's 1944 article). Yet, this is most likely to be because of the prioritisation of Allied-related war news and the perception that a swift end to the war would be the best way to save persecuted civilian populations in Europe.

This idea is supported by Kalb in his statement that the Holocaust was not a 'burning story' during wartime (2003: 9) (see Chapter Four). Max Frankel also asserts that *The New York Times*' coverage of the Holocaust implied that whilst the atrocities committed against European Jews were horrific, they were not significantly more noteworthy than those inflicted on millions of other war victims (Frankel in: Shapiro, 2003: 79-80). The other war victims that Frankel is likely to be referring not only include those killed on the Front Line, but also to the innocent civilians killed by Luftwaffe aerial bombing during the Blitz. As shown in this research, there are many instances of war news taking precedence in placement over this news.

Hollander's assertion that news of Jewish extermination did appear in the wartime press, but that it was not always displayed prominently, (Hollander in: Shapiro, 2003: 43) has been proven correct. The reasons for this have been set out in Chapters Three and Four. They most importantly include the lessons of believing atrocity propaganda in the First World War, fears of rising anti-Semitic attitudes resulting from increased Jewish immigration, and the aforementioned prioritisation of war news.

Neither newspaper can be accused of completely nor repeatedly 'hiding' atrocity news, as Leff suggests *The New York Times* did. To completely 'hide' stories would have meant

avoiding their inclusion in the newspaper altogether. In addition, Leff's criticism that *The New York Times* 'did not grant Holocaust-related news the attention that such an attempt to wipe out an entire people 'deserved' (2005: 2) can be disputed given that it was arguably more substantial than *The Times* ' and the Second World War was most concerning to the Allied public. This study has not considered other American newspapers, so any comment on these would be unreliably informed.

According to Leff, press coverage of the Holocaust affected the way these facts digested into the knowledge of newspaper readers. "Downplaying" the extermination of the Jews during the war resulted in "collective amnesia" in post-war America (Leff, 2000: 70). In the instance of such a horror occurring again, newspaper editors could not surely repeat the mistake of allowing disbelief to cloud their judgement on how to 'hammer home' these reports. In essence, it was this lack of belief- a relic of First World War atrocity stories and the incomprehensibility of a continent-wide systematic racial extermination- which set the tone for Holocaust reporting into the latter stages of the war, even once the reports were proven to be true circa 1942.

Through examining the existing secondary literature covering Holocaust news reportage and analysing wartime news reports from two Allied countries, an original perspective has been contributed to this topic through the comparative element of this thesis. The current body of literature covering newspaper coverage of the Holocaust does not provide comparisons and contrasts between major newspapers in two or more different Allied countries.

Technical references to some journalistic paradigms such as 'above and below the fold' grant additional weight to the arguments presented regarding here editorial choices of story placement, as these are likely to have influenced editors of the two newspapers under analysis.

This research introduces the possibility of further comparative research into media reports of the Holocaust, not only in Allied countries but potentially neutral and Axis zones too. As well as newspapers, newsreels shown in cinemas acted as an important source of information for the British and American general public. What could be gleaned from watching these newsreels could prove to be an interesting and revealing research topic. Likewise, radio broadcasts via the BBC delivered news from the Front Line directly into the home. Analysis of how these broadcasts compared to US radio broadcasts, or even compared to newspaper reports is a possible research topic.

Vernon McKenzie's quote in Lipstadt's *Beyond Belief* sums up a common attitude amongst newspaper readers and editors towards the Holocaust during the Second World War:

*"Is there room in bewildered minds, obsessed by personal problems, to ponder about the fate of remote individuals?"* (1986: 269).

Clearly, the war occupied the minds of Allied populations more than the rescue of persecuted European Jewry and this was reflected in newspaper presentation. This fittingly contextualises the Holocaust and raises the question of whether the fate of six million Jews would have been more concerning to the Allied public outside of wartime.

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